

John Cortright

John Cortright was baptized in the Dutch Church on August 15, 1717 in Kingston, Ulster County, New York. He was married to Margaret Dennemerken. The baptisms of seven of their children were recorded in the Walpeck Church (New Jersey) and the Wachackemeck Church (near Port Jervis, NY). Around 1744, John moved his family to near Smithfield, PA. The 1772 tax records there include John and his sons John, Christopher and Elisha. During the Revolutionary War he was a member of the Committee of Safety in 1775 as noted in Snell's History of Sussex and Warren Counties, NJ, Page 51. He died on May 14, 1783.

In Pennsylvania, a Committee of Safety was appointed on June 30, 1775. It consisted of twenty-five members. John Cortright, at the age of 58, was one of them. The committee was to act for the defense of Pennsylvania against insurrection and invasion "in the present time of danger and uncertainty." The Committee of Safety was empowered to call out the militia, to pay them and furnish arms and other equipment if needed. The Committee also was to promote the manufacture of saltpeter which is sodium nitrate, a major component of gunpowder.