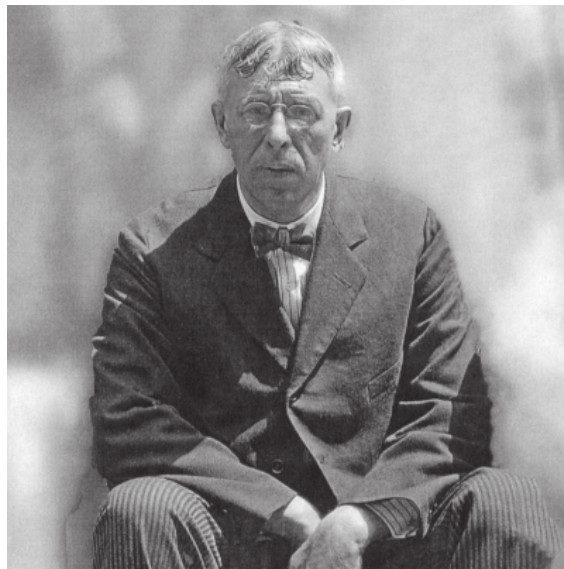




George Brodbeck

Born: 1876 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Died: February 1, 1951 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Clerk of Court: 1918-1951

Mr. Brodbeck served as the Clerk of the Court for a period of thirty-three years, from 1918 to 1951. He founded the Federal Court Clerk's Association in 1921.

When he was appointed Clerk of Court, the following newspaper article was published about his appointment:

**George Brodbeck Made Chief Clerk U.S. Court¹
Former Deputy Named for Position of Late W.W. Craig—Veteran in Service**

George Brodbeck who as a chief deputy clerk in the United States District Court filed away the affidavits in some of Pennsylvania's most celebrated lawsuits, today was appointed to succeed the late William Wright Craig, chief clerk of that court, who died last Wednesday. The appointment of Brodbeck, who is a Republican, was announced through an order issued by Judges Dickinson and Thompson, sitting in the United States District Court in this city.

The oath of office will be administered in a few days. Congratulations from employes in the Federal service and others came over the telephone and by wire to Brodbeck. From the day that Brodbeck entered the Federal service when he was twenty-one years old, he has been held in high esteem by judges and prominent corporation lawyers.

¹ *George Brodbeck Made Chief Clerk U.S. Court*, THE EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER, (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA) (Feb. 26, 1918), <http://www.newspapers.com/image/163861066>

Brodbeck is forty-two years old. He is married and has a daughter fourteen years old. He resides at 2125 West Ontario street. His first position in the Federal service was that of clerk in the old United States Circuit Court in this city. This court later became consolidated with the United States District Court, after the passage of the Moon act in 1912. For a while he was a first deputy to the late Henry B. Robb, who was chief clerk of the United States Circuit Court.

After the consolidation of the United States Circuit Court with the United States District Court, Robb became chief deputy to the late Mr. Craig. When Robb died, Brodbeck succeeded Robb and has held that position ever since.

Some of the affidavits and legal papers that Brodbeck has indexed and filed away were those in the legal suits in connection with the receivership proceedings against the Philadelphia and Reading Railway years ago and the International Lumber and Development Company, many of those officers and directors were sentenced to prison a few years ago.

In 1922, after he had served in the Clerk's office in various positions for 25 years, he was honored for his service to the Court by members of the bar. The following newspaper article described the occasion:

**Lawyers Honor Court Clerk George Brodbeck²
Present Him Clock and Gold on Completing 25 Years' Service in Office**

George Brodbeck, clerk of the United States District Court, yesterday was presented a handsome grandfather's clock and a purse of gold, by members of the bar, on the completion of 25 years' service in the clerk's office of the District Court.

The presentation was made by former Judge Abraham M. Beitler, who said Mr. Brodbeck had "discharged his duties to the satisfaction of the bench, bar and public, with rare fidelity and the loyalty and courtesy you have shown deserves the fullest thanks of us as citizens, and the public generally."

The offerings of the good will and affections of the lawyers was a complete surprise to Mr. Brodbeck, and in delivering an address of acceptance, he broke down. Over 100 of the city's leading lawyers were present, and warm compliments were paid the clerk by Judges Joseph Buffington, of the United States Court of Appeals, and J. Whitaker Thompson and Oliver B. Dickinson, of the District Court.

² *Lawyers Honor Court Clerk George Brodbeck*, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA) (Dec. 23, 1922), <http://www.newspapers.com/image/171052234>

In 1931, as a reward for thirty-three years of faithful service to the Court, and in acknowledgment of his reputation as an authority on Federal procedure, the Court admitted him as an honorary member of the bar although he was not a graduate of a law school. The following newspaper articles reference the admission ceremony, and how he learned the law and federal procedure:

Court Clerk Honored³ **U.S. District Judges Admit George Brodbeck to Federal Bar**

As a reward for his thirty-three years of faithful service, during which time he has built up a country-wide reputation as an authority on Federal procedure, the full bench of the United States District Court yesterday conferred on George Brodbeck, clerk of the court, the extraordinary honor of admitting him to the Federal bar, though he is not a graduate lawyer.

More than 300 persons, including many of the foremost lawyers of this city, Federal employees and friends of Mr. Brodbeck were present when Judges J. Whitaker Thompson, Oliver B. Dickinson and William H. Kirkpatrick convened a special session of the court to bestow on the veteran clerk an honor that has never been conferred on another in this district.

The Courts Were His Law School⁴

Fifty-three years ago, when George Brodbeck was 21, he saw an ad in the old *Philadelphia Times* which read, "Wanted: stenographer and typist—United States District Court." Brodbeck landed the job. Twenty-one years later, he was appointed Court Clerk, and he has held that office ever since.

"I've been playing around with lawyers since 1897, and I love them," comments lanky, genial Brodbeck, a widower.

And it's well that he does, because the queries he gets from lawyers relating to court rules and procedures would seriously trouble a less patient and less informed person. As it happens, it is the procedural part of law that is exciting to this court officer.

So well did he master it that after 25 years' service he himself was admitted to the bar, purely on the basis of his experience. . . .

³ *Court Clerk Honored*, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA) (Jan. 28, 1931), <http://www.newspapers.com/image/173249568>

⁴ *The Courts Were His Law School*, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA) (Jan 28, 1951), <http://www.newspapers.com/image/177960681>

Besides recording thousands of lawsuits, petitions in bankruptcy, receiverships, passport fraud cases, and naturalization procedures, Brodbeck, with the assistance of the jury commissioner, has each year selected people for the jury wheel.

And if you wonder why you have or haven't been selected, this is how it is done. Reputable and prominent citizens in ten counties are asked to submit a specified number of names of eligible candidates. These, in turn, are sent questionnaires to determine qualifications and exemptions, a system used in all U.S. courts.

In 1921 Brodbeck founded, and has since headed, the Federal Court Clerks' Association. His other major interests are baseball and prize-fighting. He has one daughter, Mrs. Sydney Needs, near whom he lives at 43d and Locust sts.

At the time of his death, the following obituary notice appeared about him that summarized his life and career:

Geo. Brodbeck Dies, Court Clerk⁵

George Brodbeck, veteran clerk of the U.S. District Court here, died yesterday morning while telephoning from his home in the Fairfax Apartments, 43d and Locust sts. He was 75.

Ill at home since last Tuesday, Mr. Brodbeck was discussing court business by phone with his assistant, Leo A. Lilly, at 10:15 A.M. yesterday when he abruptly stopped talking.

Lilly notified the Fairfax office and employes were sent to his apartment. A physician pronounced him dead.

Federal Courts Closed

As a tribute to Mr. Brodbeck, a Federal court clerk since 1918, all Federal courts were recessed and the Federal grand jury investigating rackets was adjourned until Monday morning by U.S. District Judge William H. Kirkpatrick.

On Dec. 22, 1897, Mr. Brodbeck was first appointed a stenographer and typist in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. After 25 years' service he was so expert on procedure that he was admitted to the bar, on the basis of his experience.

President for 23d Year

He founded the Federal Court Clerk's Association in 1921, composed of clerks from 84 districts. Last summer he was elected president for the 23d year.

⁵ *Geo. Brodbeck Dies, Court Clerk*, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA) (Feb. 2, 1951), <http://www.newspapers.com/image/177950971>

Three years ago, Mr. Brodbeck was honored at special ceremonies in the federal building on completion of 50 years' service.

His daughter, Mrs. Catherine B. Needs, only survivor, also lives at the Fairfax.

Funeral services will be held at 2 P.M. Monday at Oliver H. Bair's, 1820 Chestnut st. Burial will be private.