
Gordon O. Rothney

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Gerald S. Graham, “The Maritime Foundations of Imperial History”.

This is an Inaugural Lecture delivered on November 22, 1949 by 
Gerald S. Graham, upon his appointment as Rhodes Professor of Imperial 
History in the University of London, England. It is a brief survey of the 
subject dealt with more fully in his recent Empire of the North Atlantic, ie. 
of the “epoch of empire”, the past four centuries “when the control of the 
surface of the oceans was the determining influence on the foundation of 
great empires”.

Professor Graham studies the effect of sea power upon the struggle 
between France and Britain in America. “The essential difference between 
the two countries lay in the attitudes of kings and governments, for sea 
power is basically an artificial creation”, he says. “In comparison with 
continental considerations, the French overseas empire in the eighteenth 
century counted as little more than an important subsidiary.”

Gordon O. Rothney