

A COUNTRY of VAST DESIGNS

ROBERT W. MERRY

READ BY MICHAEL PRICHARD

"A crucial architect of modern America, James K. Polk deserves to be elevated out of the mists of history. In this engaging book, Robert Merry does just that."

—JON MEACHAM, author of the Pulitzer Prize winner *American Lion*

In a one-term presidency that began in 1844, James K. Polk completed the story of America's Manifest Destiny—extending its territory across the continent, from sea to sea, by threatening England and manufacturing a controversial and unpopular two-year war with Mexico that Abraham Lincoln, in Congress at the time, opposed as preemptive.

Robert W. Merry tells this story through powerful debates and towering figures—the outgoing President John Tyler and Polk's great mentor, Andrew Jackson; his defeated Whig opponent, Henry Clay; Secretary of State James Buchanan; Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun; and ex-president Martin Van Buren, like Polk a Jackson protégé but now a Polk rival.

This was a time of tremendous clashing forces. A surging antislavery sentiment was at the center of the territorial fight. The struggle between a slave-owning South and an opposing North was leading inexorably to Civil War. In a gripping narrative, Merry illuminates a crucial epoch in U.S. history.

Robert W. Merry has been a Washington, D.C., journalist and publishing executive for thirty-five years, including a decade as a *Wall Street Journal* correspondent and a dozen years as president and editor in chief of Congressional Quarterly, Inc. He is the author of *Sands of Empire* and the award-winning *Taking on the World*.

Named one of the top ten Golden Voices by *SmartMoney* magazine, Michael Prichard has recorded over 450 audiobooks, including *House of Abraham* by Stephen Berry. He has also won several *AudioFile* Earphones Awards, including one for *In Nixon's Web* by L. Patrick Gray III.



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Running Time: 19 Hours • Unabridged

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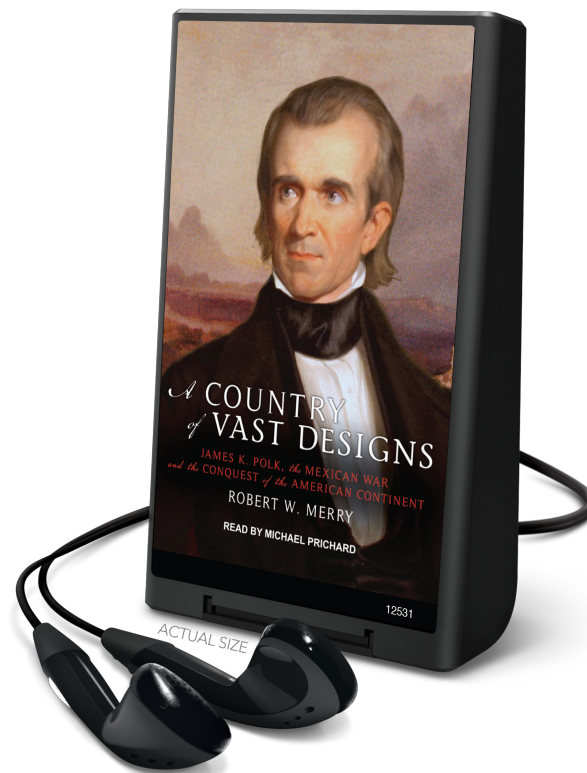
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