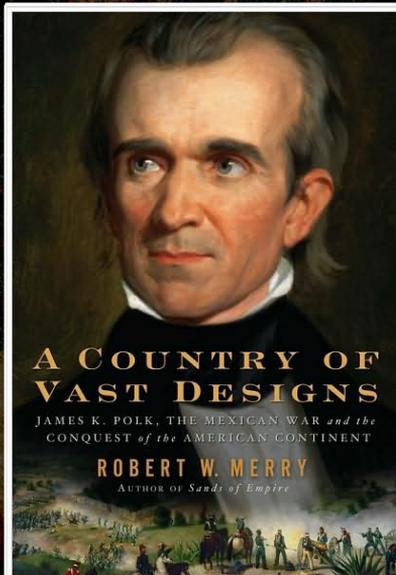


# FOREIGN POLICY & POLITICS

## OVERVIEW

History has been fickle with James Knox Polk, the eleventh President of the United States. In some ways, he was the most successful president, given his agenda. He told a cabinet member that he had four goals: to claim Oregon from the British, gain California from Mexico, reduce the tariffs, and establish an independent treasury. He accomplished all of this in one term, and expanded the size of the U.S. by 500,000 square miles, establishing the map of the continental United States as it is today (except for the sliver of the southwest known as the Gadsden purchase). He would die at age 53 only months after leaving office.

Merry is a sure-footed guide through the intimidating complexities of international and domestic politics that produced these conflicts. He makes an especially strong case that Polk, for all his slyness, truly believed that enlarging the country was a nationalist enterprise that should overcome sectional divisions, not deepen them.



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## About the Author



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