The Louisiana Purchase at a Glance

Spanish explorers were the first to travel through present-day Louisiana and across the Mississippi River in the early 1500s, but French explorer Rene-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, was the first European to claim the area for his country in 1682.

What if the middle of our country had remained French?

The Louisiana Purchase involved more than 827,000 square miles, or 530,000,000 acres of land.
The original deal proposed by President Thomas Jefferson was $10 million for just New Orleans and all or parts of East and West Florida because the United States needed access to coastal areas for shipping and trading.

French leader Napoleon Bonaparte offered to sell all of Louisiana to the United States in 1803 after his army, which was sent to put down a slave rebellion in the French colony of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), was decimated by casualties and sickness.

The United States agreed to pay $11,250,000 for the land and assumed the responsibility of paying citizens' claims of $3,750,000 for a total purchase price of $15 million, or about 3 cents per acre.

The official treaty did not include any specifics about where Louisiana's boundaries lay because no one knew exactly where those boundaries were.

Fifteen states were carved from the Louisiana Purchase: Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.