In 1858, Stephen Douglas ran for re-election to the Senate in Illinois. Republican **Abraham Lincoln** ran against him. They held a series of debates about slavery in the territories. Douglas was against slavery but favored popular sovereignty. This meant that the voters in each territory should decide whether to allow slavery. Lincoln called slavery "a vast moral evil." Douglas won the election, but the Lincoln-Douglas debates made Lincoln famous.

In 1859, a Northern white abolitionist tried to start a slave rebellion. John Brown and a few followers attacked a federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. They were captured and executed. Brown was praised in the North. Southerners were furious.

Republicans nominated Lincoln for president in 1860. The Democratic Party split into Northern and Southern branches. Lincoln won—without any electoral votes from the South. Southern reaction to Lincoln's election was dramatic. South Carolina seceded in December of 1860.

Southerners felt they had lost their political power in the United States. They feared an end to their whole way of life. By February 1861, seven Southern states had seceded. They formed the Confederate States of America, or **Confederacy.** They elected **Jefferson Davis** president.

4. What major event led to the secession of Southern states from the Union?

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