Before You Read . . .
1. Consider the subtitle of the book. What do you think the author means by “slavery, sacrifice, and survival”?
2. Consider each of these ideas independently. What do you think about when you consider slavery as it relates to Connecticut? What did the ideas of sacrifice and survival mean for the people of the Civil War period?

Introduction
1. Americans widely recognize that the Civil War was fought over the issue of slavery. Yet to what end? Was it primarily over the morality of the institution—that southerners believed slavery to be moral and northerners believed it immoral? Or were other aspects of the institution relevant to the conflict?
2. What aspects of Connecticut’s history might help shed light on such a fundamental question about the nation’s greatest and most horrific bloodletting?
3. To what extent was Connecticut an abolitionist state?
4. Why else might those in Connecticut rally to fight the South?
5. Were some within the state opposed to the war, and for what reasons?

Chapter 1. Connecticut within the Nation, 1776–1860
1. What was Connecticut’s role in the history of slavery and race?
2. How and when did the state abolish slavery?
3. How did abolitionism develop in Connecticut?
4. How does the story of Prudence Crandall help to answer these questions?
5. In the 1850s many in the North advocated “Free Soil” and “Free Labor.” What did these ideas represent, and how did they fit in with issues of slavery and race?
6. How does Connecticut’s connection to slavery and race cause you to rethink the state’s position in the Civil War and answer the question of why its people rallied to fight the South?
Chapter 2. And the War Came, 1860–61
1. What did the gubernatorial election of 1860 reveal about Connecticut’s commitment to the looming war that faced the nation?
2. Did Connecticut citizens believe that war was imminent? Did they believe the conflict would be long?
3. What was Connecticut’s initial reaction to the firing on Fort Sumter?
4. Explain the “Peace Movement” in the state. Who was the leading political figure of the movement?

Chapter 3. A Recognition of Death, 1862
1. Consider the start of the war. What was the Union’s primary strategy and what role did Connecticut troops play?
2. Why was the Battle of Antietam such a critical point in the war? Think about Robert E. Lee’s goals when invading Maryland. Did he achieve them?
3. How does the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation connect to Antietam and what does it say about the issue of slavery as a moral component of the war?
4. Which four Connecticut regiments fought at Antietam, and how did they fare in the battle?

Chapter 4. The Union Crucible, 1863
1. How did Connecticut Democrats respond to the Emancipation Proclamation?
2. How did Connecticut Republicans respond to the Emancipation Proclamation, and how did this reflect their earlier views on race and abolition?
3. How was the gubernatorial election of 1863 critical to both Connecticut and the Union’s outlook on the war?
4. To what extent did Connecticut soldiers involve themselves in the election? What did they have to say?
5. What did the the Soldiers’ Aid Societies do to aid the war effort?
6. Discuss the lives of Connecticut soldiers as reflected in the stories of the three men the author follows through the war? What were their main concerns?
Chapter 5. Expensive Victory, 1864–65
1. In the spring of 1864, the Union Army experiences some of the bloodiest battles of the war. Why is this? What happens that brings so much bloodshed?
2. The summer of 1864 reveals tremendously low morale. Why is this?
3. What do some in the Republican Party urge President Lincoln to do in regard to the Emancipation Proclamation? What does this say about the moral arguments over slavery?
4. How do the Republican and Democratic Party views on race affect the presidential election of 1864?
5. What is Connecticut’s reaction to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln?

Chapter 6. Survival’s Memory, 1865–1965
1. What does the author mean by the difference between justice and healing?
2. How does the idea of “reconciliation” explain the aftermath of the war, all the way to the 100th anniversary?
3. How do returning soldiers and those at home attempt to make sense of the war? What do they do to provide meaning, to “survive” the war?
4. What do the ideas of justice, healing, reconciliation, and survival have to do with the history of slavery and race? How do they reflect, or fail to reflect, the meaning of the war for many whites?
5. How does the referendum to the Connecticut Constitution reflect such issues?

Epilogue and Post-Reading Discussion
1. What does the author mean when he writes, “We should not take the confluence of the nation’s survival and slavery’s death to mean that the nation somehow aligned those two objectives during the war”?
2. How does confusion over the causes and outcome of the Civil War continue to play out in American society today?
3. Does that confusion continue to perpetuate misunderstanding between the North and South?
4. Finally, once again consider the subtitle of the book. How would you now interpret the meaning of “slavery, sacrifice, and survival”? 