

# Discussion Questions

## *Settlin': Stories of Madison's Early African American Families*

by Muriel Simms



Questions courtesy of the author.

1. What stories gave you an understanding of what these interviewees experienced? Why did you select these stories?
2. Name incidences in the lives of some of the interviewees that affected you the most. Why did they affect you the way they did?
3. Did most of the stories in the book make you feel badly? Why do you think you had that reaction? Did most of the stories in the book make you feel like the interviewees had a productive life? Why?
4. What are some themes that permeate these stories? Some of the themes that you may notice are: striving for an education, noting family talents, participating in extracurricular activities, and showing the desire to be justice-oriented. How do you see these themes running through the stories? Did you notice any others?
5. What did you think of the Book Lovers Club? What did you learn?
6. How important is learning the history, thoughts, and activities of these interviewees to Madison's teens and young adults, particularly 11th and 12th graders? (Note: this book is not recommended for classroom use with younger students.)
7. After reading the book, how do you feel about the importance of oral storytelling?
8. What are some pieces of Madison's history you did not know before reading the book?
9. In what ways can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted to your perceptions of how African Americans experience life in Madison today?