

Discussion Questions for *Heyday* by Kurt Andersen

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Did you find the characters believable? Which of the characters did you like the most? Which did you dislike?
3. Did you find the dialog in the story realistic?
4. What did you think of the plot line development? How credible did the author make the plot? Did the plot take turns you did not expect, or did you find it predictable?
5. The author covers a lot of ground in the book. Revolution in France, the Gold Rush, the cholera epidemic, Charles Darwin, Utopian communities, the Mormons, Lincoln's partner in Springfield, and so on. Did you learn anything about the time period covered in the book?
6. Did the author convey the era well? Did it feel like the author did his homework?
7. At times the author has a nice way with words. One nice passage is this one (page 461):

Priscilla had grown to adore the emptiness. It had never occurred to her before that *horizon* and *horizontal* were, as she thought of it now, parent and child.

Were there any passages or scenes that you remember well or particularly liked?

8. The word "heyday" appears twice on page 575. The first reference is to the little mining community started by Ben, Polly, Duff, and Skaggs.

Ashbyville had not dissolved, but its heyday was over.

As that summer began, the heyday of California was either ending or beginning, depending upon where one looked.

Why do you think the author called the book *Heyday*?

9. Has anyone had an experiences that relate to places or experiences in the book?
10. Any comments about the way the book ended?
11. Are there questions you would like to ask?