***The Other California* by Gerald Haslam**

**Discussion Questions for the Peggy Darling Book Club**

**Kern County Museum- Mike McCoy**

1. How does the “horseshoe” southern end of the San Joaquin Valley create a unique environment for Kern County and Bakersfield? How do the twin industries of oil and ag set the area apart from the rest of California?
2. How does the Kern River impact the county’s culture and people? How has water impacted politics and the economy?
3. Haslam comments on writers who have written about the Valley. Any new voices here or books you would like to explore?
4. *The Grapes of Wrath* by Steinbeck continues to be the one literary work that is most closely associated with the Southern Valley. Why was this book so controversial when it was published 80 years ago?
5. Two characters are described in the book, Haslam’s father Speck Haslam and the historian W. H. Hutchinson. What were their roles as guides to Haslam?
6. One subject of Haslam’s work has been on the Okies and places like Taft and Oildale. Why are these subjects largely ignored by other California writers?