

# **The Boomtown Chronicles: Reflections On a Changing California**

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**Transcript: Interview with Jesus Fernandez: CCA Leader In Spanish  
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**RACHEL GOODMAN:** Describe the conditions that farmworkers are living in around this region>

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** In the whole region, in Monterey County and in Santa Cruz county, they are completely and absolutely bad. Bad and the farm worker like me, works ten or twelve hours a day on the land, and we are very sad to return home to our house in a little corner. On Salinas road, there are three committees established by CCA, for example, rerepresentatives of CCA, they work toward habitable houses. In one studio, there is a bed, a stove, and a bathroom together, and eight people are living there. The parents, older siblings and younger siblings.

**RACHEL GOODMAN:** And how much are they paying?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** It's expensive, because they are paying \$750 a month. And it's a studio. In Santa Cruz, for two bedrooms, you can pay \$1,800 a month, and when you work on the farm, you don't have money for food, or clothing or anything. When I rented a house, I invited my cousin, my family, we were 16, 17 or 26 people in two bedrooms.

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** I am in the Pinto Lake committee. It began in 1998, primarily because the little trailers in Pinto Lake, I was living in two little rooms, there were 7 in my family. Me, my spouse, three more people and two kids. I was sad because I would come home from work and my kids couldn't study for school, they were studying, but, for many years, they couldn't in that place. In the Pinto Lake project, we began to have hope that we would come to reach a foundation to move to a new trailer camp. We hoped that they would construct 52 houses, 20 made, we would return there and qualify for loans, for a place with enough bedrooms for our family.

**RACHEL GOODMAN:**In the new Pinto Lake, there are more bedrooms?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** Yes, there will be enough bedrooms for all. We are working hard, for people to move there. We can't regard? I believe it will result in a positive result. Because there are problems for the company the way it was?

**RACHEL GOODMAN:**The landlord for the new place?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** The county put the eviction order for all people who lived in Pinto Lake. Because they don't have health, there were many health problems. The landlord, the county took over.

**RACHEL GOODMAN:**The landlord got a fine?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** Yes, the got a fine and?

**RACHEL GOODMAN:** Who is the new landlord?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** Mid Peninsula Housing Corporation Coalition? It's an organization that has some problems with us. The people that come to Pinto Lake have a fight. With the county needs to treat us like people not animals. The company constructs new housing they need to treat us with respect.

**RACHEL GOODMAN:** Was the experience with the committees positive for you?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** Yes indeed! The organization helps us with our rights. We can't do anything alone, with some arbitrations. We can talk, we can secure our rights. For many years, we work, we work, we work, we didn't know our rights. Now with the committees, we have representatives of CCA, we know our rights, our health, now it is healthier, better, cheaper, because we have a place. One house on the open market, the trailer park, costs \$1,800 or \$1,000, we are paying maximum \$1,000 for trailer homes. Many campesinos only make \$10,000 a year.

**RACHEL GOODMAN:** The committees, are they a model for the region for farmworkers?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** The model of CCA, is established in both counties, Monterey and Santa Cruz, it's magnificent. It started out small with little funding, but now it's established all over the region. In Monterey, and Santa Cruz, the committees help the people know their rights and it's very good. The questions are good, because the whole region is involved.

**RACHEL GOODMAN:** Will you have a big party when you move into the new houses?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** Yes, we will have a big celebration with all the people who are involved from the county planning commission, etc.

**RACHEL GOODMAN:** Anything else you'd like to add?

**JESUS FERNANDEZ:** Well, my hopes for the future for our children, I believe they will need a home so they don't live in the street. I hope they will have a television, a bedroom of their own, so they can study better.