

## “Moccasin Economy” - Lowell Amiotte - OSEU 7

On the reservation, there's a whole moccasin economy that is out there where people are making money through exchange of goods or doing things that people don't think they're doing, like ranchers, you know, some big ranchers out there. And land, again, becomes very important then, and resources. So you have this person leasing this person's land, paying them for it. There's not enough of this little parcel because it's been divided up so many times. You know, they were given 160 acres, they have four kids, bam, there goes your 160 acres.

Each of those four kids have four kids, bam, and pretty soon they're so small, those parcels were so small that they were practically useless. But some people are getting little checks because they have some land that the government leases out for them. There was a large settlement recently because the manufacturers or the oil people or whatever was on a certain reservation came in and they were taking natural resources and not really paying for them. And now all of a sudden, people wake up.

And they had a lawsuit, it was won, so there is some money coming in to different people on the reservation who are landowners. So you know, when you talk about the economy, you have to look at the reservation and see that there's a different kind of economy. One thing Native American people have always been very generous, and they've always shared. I think it used to be said that the richest man in the village was the one who had the least because he gave everything away. And I think that still goes on with the giveaways and so on.

You go to a powwow and they have a giveaway and they're giving away blankets and pictures and chairs and, you know, even horse or cow once in a while. And so you look at the economy on the reservation differently. You look, of course, at all these people who are working for the BIE or public health service and so on, but there's also that other economy that's going on below the surface.