Emma Harriet Minesinger (1866–1950) was a woman of many ancestries (Shoshone, Salish, Spanish, German) who lived in Montana and to a lesser extent Alberta during a time of dramatic, rapid, and irrevocable change. Almost continually on the move until granted an allotment on the Flathead Reservation in Montana in 1908, she was a wife from age sixteen, and a mother who tragically lost all but one of her five children to accidents and illness. She worked as a domestic servant, homesteader and farmer, cook, hunter, buckskin tailor, beadwork artist, and gatherer of alumroot. She ran a pack train, operated a “stopping place” and café, drove a chuck wagon, and took in laundry. We rarely have insight into the lives of women such as Emma, but she left an account of her life, *Montana Memories*, in collaboration with, and written by her great-niece, Ida Pearl Smith Patterson. Emma is remembered warmly by her descendants who cherish their memories of her, as well as her beadwork, buckskin clothing, photographs, and documents Emma herself wrote or kept to chart her life, her personal archive.

I discovered Emma while at the K. Ross Toole Archives at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at the University of Montana in Missoula. I was looking for accounts about or by women who held allotments on reservations as part of my study of land distribution policies and gender on both sides of the 49th parallel. The very helpful archivist presented me with the manuscript copy of *Montana Memories* by Ida Patterson. I was intrigued by the narrative of Emma’s life for many reasons, but mainly because it provided a rare glimpse into the history of the Montana–Alberta borderlands from the perspective of an Aboriginal woman,
detailing her great variety of jobs and tasks, and how she persevered through hardships and setbacks. I was pleased to find that Emma had been a cook at the Bar U Ranch, today a National Historic Site in the Alberta foothills near High River, as we have little knowledge of the women who worked at such jobs.\textsuperscript{4} Researcher Amy McKinney helped me find other sources on Emma, eventually leading me to the massive genealogical collection in the Glenbow left by Walter K. Miles (Emma’s great-nephew).\textsuperscript{5} But my understanding of Emma would have remained superficial if it were not for a surprise email in September 2008 from Emma’s great-granddaughter Peggy Budding Ensminger of Los Angeles, California. Peggy had googled her great-grandmother and my name came up as the presenter of a paper on Emma at the American Society for Ethnohistory in 2007.\textsuperscript{6} Peggy wrote, “I am very curious to know more about your research on this woman as I believe that she is my great grandmother.” I learned through this remarkable and serendipitous communication, that I was in touch with Emma’s only direct descendants. In her second email, Peggy wrote, “Before you finalize your manuscript I would love for you to speak with my mother [Jean Ensminger], who is 77, as she can provide some, I believe, helpful details of Emma’s life. She spent a great deal of time with Emma when she and her husband, Andrew Magee, lived in California during the 1930s. My mother’s grandparents lived next door to her. My mother also made many trips to visit Emma on the Flathead Reservation. I have a great deal of photos and other documents which may be of interest to you.” This was every historian’s dream, seldom realized. Just over two months later, my University of Alberta ethics application approved, I was off to Los Angeles to meet Jean and Peggy. Jean is the daughter of Emma’s daughter Hazel, the only one of Emma’s five (perhaps six) children to survive into adulthood and to have a child. Peggy is Jean’s daughter. Their knowledge of Emma and her family, and their collection of her documents, photos, and beadwork are at the heart of this article, making its publication possible, and I want to thank them very warmly for sharing these and for their hospitality.

Emma’s life, as represented in the publication *Montana Memories*, in her own documents, in the recollections of her descendants, and in her beadwork, is a lesson in borderlands history.\textsuperscript{7} She and other family members shuttled between Canada and the U.S., their lives shaped by forces from both sides of the border. Meinsinger Creek in southern Alberta, and Minesinger Ridge and Trail in Montana record the presence of this family on both sides of the border (spellings of the name varied). The Minesingers
defied tidy boundaries, categories, and notions of fixed identities, and they provide insight into the boundary culture of people of multiple ancestries of the Canadian–American borderlands. As the daughter of a man of Pennsylvania Dutch (German) ancestry, and a woman of Shoshone, Salish, and Spanish ancestry, and as the wife of two white men, first Thomas Waymack, and later Andrew Magee, Emma negotiated multiple worlds. Just as she crisscrossed the 49th parallel, Emma functioned in the economic, social, and cultural world of the new settlers at the same time as she retained a strong attachment to her Aboriginal ancestry. As an example of her shifting worlds, Emma attended school for a term at Victor, Montana, where she was able to visit her grandmother, Strong Old Woman, or Mrs. Carlos Monteray, in a nearby “Indian encampment.” Emma inherited the oral culture of her mother’s people and she spoke Salish and some Shoshone, as well as English, which she also read and wrote. She bridged an Aboriginal era when oral communication dominated and the text-based settler phase.
During Emma’s early years in the late nineteenth century, colonial and national categories and identities were not firmly established, and there was a boundary or border culture of people who were in between or at the margins. Her family tree provides insight into the complex web of kinship of the people of multiple ancestries who lived cross-border lives.¹⁰ By Emma’s later years, categories and identities were more fixed and movement across the border was more circumscribed. The Aboriginal and settler worlds were more divided and distinct, and the Canadian–American divide sharper. It became useful and prudent for Emma to settle south of the 49th parallel, where divorce was not difficult, where she could obtain an allotment, and where she could live on a reservation with her non-Aboriginal husband, none of which were possible in Canada. Other Minesingers and numerous other relatives received allotments on the Flathead Reservation as “Indians” while some who stayed in Canada received Métis scrip. Now firmly an “American,” Emma and other families of the borderlands were forgotten and erased from Canadian history. With their special affection for national borders, historians mistakenly sharpened boundaries that were blurred in the past. But Emma left a record of her life and her intermingled and manifold boundary culture.

The term *boundary culture* has been used to describe the kind of collaborative Native American autobiography or personal narrative that Emma and Ida Patterson produced. These were usually solicited by Euro-American/Canadians who recorded and then edited the words of their Aboriginal “informants.” Hertha Wong has suggested that we think of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Native American autobiography as “a type of literary ‘boundary culture’ where two cultures influence each other simultaneously.”¹¹ These autobiographies, according to Wong were border encounters that changed Native American forms of oral personal narrative, but also challenged Euro-American notions of narrative. In the case of Emma’s autobiography however, neat binaries of the Euro-American collector/editor and the non-literate Aboriginal informant do not fit. Ida Patterson was not an “outsider” but a family member, and also a resident of the Flathead Reservation. Like Emma, she had multiple ancestries, which in her case included Plains Métis through her great-grandmother, Marie Rose Smith, a rancher at Pincher Creek, Alberta, and a writer. Nor was Emma an “illiterate” Aboriginal informant; she read and wrote in English and even began to write her own memoirs, to be discussed later.

*Montana Memories* by Ida Patterson was first published in twenty-three issues of the *Montana Farmer-Stockman* between 15 March 1950 and 1
April 1951. This version is nearly identical to the manuscript bearing the same title in the K. Ross Toole Archives, and this is the version published in 1981 by the Salish Kootenai Community College as *Montana Memories: The Life of Emma Magee in the Rocky Mountain West*. There are other versions and complexities however, to be discussed below. Some of the “facts” and details presented in *Montana Memories* have been questioned by relatives and editors, and some of these are noted below, or in the endnotes when particularly convoluted or murky. For the purposes of providing an overview of Emma’s life however, I have opted to present the version provided by Emma and Ida, augmented by other sources when available and salient. The basic narration of the main events and people in Emma’s life in *Montana Memories* appears sound, although Ida added a great deal of flourish, context, and re-organization of her own to this framework.

The story of Emma’s life as told in *Montana Memories* begins with her birth in 1866 at her parents’ homestead, just north of Hell Gate, or present-day Missoula. Emma’s mother, Nellie, or Quick-to-See was born in 1826 in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, the daughter of a Shoshone and Salish (Flathead) woman, Strong Old Woman, and Carlos Monteray, a Spaniard. It is explained that Nellie and her mother were Shoshone “because it was customary to determine both the tribal and family relationship by the Mother’s blood. Therefore, since the Flathead and Spanish strain came from the male side of the family, my Grandmother and Mother were classed as Shoshone.” The memoir establishes that as a child, Emma was exposed to a mix of Shoshone, Salish and Euro-American influences, but her mother’s influence was paramount. She learned to harvest and dry wild fruits, vegetables, and medicines. Her mother also taught Emma and her sister Mary beadwork, embroidery, sewing, knitting, and cooking. They made suits, gloves, and moccasins from buckskin. A chapter of *Montana Memories* is devoted to “fireside recollections” of her mother’s “ancient Indian lore . . . handed down from generation to generation thorough the long ages.” Trickster tales, usually with Coyote as the main character, are characteristic of Shoshone oral tradition, and Coyote appears in one of the stories Emma recalled from her mother.

Emma’s father was James Madison Minesinger, from Erie, Pennsylvania, and according to *Montana Memories* he was of Dutch ancestry but this is a frequent error (possibly made by Ida) when the term *Pennsylvania Dutch* is used, which refers to a particular group of immigrants from Germany. In her 1933 testimony in the matter of the estate of her mother, Emma stated that her father “was a white man of German descent.”
According to family genealogist Walter K. Miles, James was born between 1824 and 1826, so he was about the same age as Nellie. While it was claimed in *Montana Memories* that James was a civil engineer and a graduate of Yale, Miles found no record of this in the Yale alumni office and he also learned that Yale only granted the first degree in civil engineering in 1860, some years after James had relocated to the Montana Territory. In 1856, he arrived in the Bitterroot valley on a cattle drive and he prospected gold, freighted and logged, and worked as a free trader. He married Nellie in 1858 in a ceremony solemnized by Father Anthony Ravalli and they continued to travel and trade before settling on the homestead north of Hell Gate. Their oldest child was Henry followed by Mary, Emma, and twins Charles and John, who died in infancy, and John II, born thirteen years after the twins. James was a prominent citizen of the Missoula district. He was a founding member and secretary of the Masonic Lodge, and for over a decade, beginning in 1865, he was elected County Surveyor. James surveyed the original townsite of Missoula, according to Emma's obituary, which appeared under the heading “Daughter of Man Who Platted Missoula Dies.” The Minesinger home was a convenient stopping place for traders, farmers, missionaries, cowboys, and packers. *Montana Memories* mentions some of the frequent visitors who were prominent or noteworthy in Montana history, including “Calamity Jane.”

At the age of five, Emma lost the sight in her right eye while playing with her brother Henry when an arrow he aimed at a bee hit her instead. Many photographs of Emma, particularly as a young woman, show her left profile; she turned so that her right eye was not visible to the camera. The three eldest Minesinger children were educated at Hell Gate public school where “all of the scholars . . . were white children except for us.” Unlike the other children, they went to school in moccasins and red flannel leggings and they took jerked buffalo meat for lunch. This school only operated for three months during the summer, and for some years, their father tutored them at home in the winter, although occasionally other friends took his place while he was occupied elsewhere. Emma also attended a summer term at Victor, Montana. Her brother Charles died in his early teens of Bright’s disease. The youngest brother, John, attended Fort Shaw Indian Boarding School in the Sun River Valley, Montana.

In her early teens, Emma’s school years ended, and she went to work as a domestic servant in Missoula with the Higgins family, and then at Grass Valley at the Latimer ranch. Her sister Mary also worked as a domestic servant but eloped at age sixteen with former Hell Gate schoolmate.
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Alfred Miles, of Irish ancestry. The couple first lived with his parents at Evaro, Montana. In 1881, while visiting Mary at Evaro, Emma met and hastily married a boarder at the Miles’ home, Thomas Waymack, from Baltimore, who had arrived in Montana with the United States Infantry and served in the Nez Perce War. He was ten years older than Emma, “tall and blonde with a flowing mustache,” a bartender in a saloon, and addicted to alcohol. *Montana Memories* makes it clear from the start that the marriage was a mistake: “The old adage reads, ‘Marry in haste, and repent at leisure.’ I did both. Six weeks after meeting Mr. Waymack, I was his bride. . . . As the sixteen year old wife of this arrogant ex-soldier I was to find the complexities of life increased fourfold.” Their life together was characterized by constant travel and poverty as Waymack was restless, always imagining a fortune was to be made in some new locale or at a new venture, and drinking away any gains they made. Often Emma was left alone for long periods with their children, and she always worked at a great variety of occupations to provide for her family.

Emma’s brother Henry was the first of the family to head north to Canada. In 1875, he went on a trail ride to the Red River settlement (Winnipeg) where he remained, marrying a Red River Métis woman, Marie Borsow (or Bourassa) in 1878. Henry remained in Manitoba for ten years and arrived in southern Alberta in 1885. He worked for years as a cowhand at the Bar U Ranch but he and Mary later established their own ranch near High River. Mary was a skilled midwife in the High River district and she and Henry had nine children of their own.

Henry and family likely moved to southern Alberta because other Minesingers were there. In the early 1880s, Mary (Emma’s sister) and her husband Alfred Miles moved to High River to ranch on the part of the river now known as Eden Valley. James and Nellie Minesinger (Emma’s parents) also moved north. In the summer of 1882 James, “an excellent axe-man,” helped construct the North-West Cattle Company ranch buildings (that became the Bar U), and the following summer he built the Quorn Ranch buildings. The senior Minesingers settled beside daughter Mary and her husband Alfred Miles, establishing the Minesinger-Miles ranch. Emma’s husband Thomas Waymack also dreamed of making a fortune as a cattle breeder in Alberta. He and Emma set out to join the other Minesingers in 1883, but their horses were stolen by the Blackfoot near Choteau. Waymack then fell ill, and when they finally arrived in High River after some months on the road, he decided he did not want to be a “cattle king” after all and they soon left for Montana.
Taking the “old Indian trail” through the Crow’s Nest Pass that led southward into Tobacco Plains, Emma and Thomas Waymack stopped and visited with Sophie Morigeau, who ran a trading post, had a herd of cattle, and a pack horse business that often took her into British Columbia. (See Jean Barman’s article on Morigeau in this volume.) Montana Memories details other adventures along the way, including an incident at another trading post where Emma’s knowledge of the rules of trading and of the Salish language helped narrowly avert a confrontation with a group of Nez Perce headed for Canada. She also succeeded in talking her husband out of capturing the leader of this group to collect a government reward.

Emma gave birth to her first child, Margaret Virginia, in the winter of 1884 all alone in an isolated, dilapidated shack rented from a French Canadian trapper on Upper Flathead Lake. Waymack had a job transporting freight, but just after their daughter was born, he left for the gold mines in Idaho. Emma’s food supply quickly diminished, she ran out of fuel, and knew that she and the baby would perish if they stayed in the shack, so she walked with her infant for over two miles through bitter winds and snowdrifts to take shelter for two weeks with their nearest neighbours.

When Waymack returned from Idaho, he was enthusiastic about another venture: supplying commodities by pack train to the gold camps. They moved to Thompson Falls, Montana, and purchased pack horses. Emma loaded the horses, then tied her baby on her back and rode or walked with the pack train along narrow mountain trails. With these proceeds, Waymack bought a saloon in Thompson Falls, but “ever a sot himself he was his own best customer and by spring the business was dissolved.”

He then got work in a mine while Emma cooked for him and four other miners. He soon gave this up as well and spent his time at odd jobs and drinking. A second child, a son named James Francis, was born in 1886. To provide for her growing family Emma made and sold buckskin clothes, tanning the hides herself. She hunted for meat and on one occasion got lost in the dense forest around Thompson Falls, spending a night in the forest alone until found by a search party. She also provided fuel for their home, which was a particularly difficult task in the winter of 1886–87, one of the most severe in western history. Emma started an “eating place” for freighters on the way to the Idaho camps. She sold the freighters her buckskin clothing and also did their laundry.

In the spring of 1887, Waymack left to work in the Drumlummon mine in Marysville, Montana, a booming town in the Rocky Mountains (today a ghost town). After several months, he sent the funds for Emma and the
children to join him. On the morning of the move in July, Emma left her sleeping children at dawn to walk to the neighbours on an errand. As she returned, a rider galloped toward her and asked if she had left her children at home. “‘Well,’ he hesitated an awful moment. ‘I am sorry to inform you that your house has burned to the ground.’” A fire of unknown origin had completely destroyed her home and her children had perished: “Everything I loved was gone.” The Missoulan reported the deaths of the two Waymack children in the house fire on 15 July 1887, and it was also noted that the Waymacks had lost an infant earlier that year to measles. This child (if the Missoulan was correct) is not mentioned in the memoir.

The Waymacks then tried their luck homesteading, in the Bitterroot Valley near Florence, Montana, where they “eked out a frugal existence” for six years. Waymack had no experience as a farmer. Emma was “a hired hand as well as a housekeeper.” Two boys were born during these years, James (Jimmy) Francis, and Peter. One financial bright light was that Emma dug and sold alumroot, found in abundance on their land. According to Montana Memories, Emma was in a Missoula drug store when she overheard a customer complaining of dysentery to the pharmacist. She prescribed the “Indian remedy” of alumroot tea and when this produced the desired effect, the pharmacist asked for more. With the help of several men, all of the alumroots were dug on their homestead. They were paid $5,000 dollars for the roots, and for any claim they might have to the medicine.

With this windfall in hand, Waymack decided to give up farming and head to Alberta once again. Emma readily agreed as her parents, sister, and brother were there. It took six weeks to make the trip first to Helena and then northward. They rented a house in High River and Waymack found work in a nearby coal mine, but once again he squandered all their money on drink. According to Montana Memories: “Our conjugal relationship had been strained to the utmost. My husband’s ever-increasing dissoluteness offered no hope of future felicity. So, one morning after he left for work, I hitched the team to the wagon and my children and I returned to my parental home.” Waymack demanded custody of their eldest son, Jimmy, and Emma agreed reluctantly, as she feared for her son’s welfare. The following spring the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) found a shivering, hungry child left all alone in a camp on the Alberta prairie. Asked about his family, he could remember only his uncle Henry who worked at the Bar U and a letter was mailed to him, but he was out on the roundup and did not receive it for six weeks. The letter eventually reached Emma at her parents’ ranch.
While she contacted police, they could find no trace of her son. *Montana Memories* does not let readers learn of Jimmy’s fate until a later chapter.

In May 1894, Emma’s father James Minesinger died suddenly while visiting Calgary. According to *Montana Memories*, he was on a business trip when he contracted black diphtheria and passed away the next night. “So malignant was the disease considered then, that the early morning hours saw his body conveyed from the Calgary Hotel to the cemetery. There it was quickly interred. Funeral services were not permitted, thus sparing his family the risk of exposure.” Emma’s sister Mary however, an excellent horsewoman, risked flooding rivers and swollen streams to get to Calgary, but arrived only in time to view the recently made mound of her father’s grave.

After leaving her husband, Emma worked as a cook at the Bar U Ranch. She remained in the High River area for a year before returning to Montana, leaving her son Peter in the care of her mother and sister (see Figure 8.1). Among the documents Emma kept is a letter from her mother dated 17 January 1895 written from Pekisko, High River, to Emma in Missoula (see Figure 8.2). Her mother was staying at “the old police shack,” possibly the one on the Bar U Ranch. Nellie wrote to let Emma know that “I am well and your little boy is all right again” and that Johnny [Emma’s brother] was making a home for her [Nellie] at Henry’s. She closed with “how do you like it over there or will you come back in spring.” Emma likely returned to Montana in order to obtain a divorce from Waymack, as this would have been virtually impossible in Canada, where divorce was rare, expensive, and in Alberta, obtainable only through the federal Parliament. In Montana, by contrast, divorce was easily accessible, and the divorce rate was “extraordinarily high.” Divorce cases were heard and granted by local county courts.

In Montana Emma found work once again with the Latimer Ranch at Grass Valley and there fell in love with one of the ranch hands, Andrew (Andy) D. Magee, of Scottish and Irish descent (see Figure 8.3). He was quite unlike Waymack, as he “possessed the true Scotsman’s thrift. His business ventures resulted in financial profits, which accumulated to his advantage.” They went to Alberta, likely to get Emma’s son Peter, and were married in Fort McLeod in September 1895. They returned to Montana first to Missoula where Andy worked in a nearby logging camp and the following year Emma and Andy worked for the Charles Allard family, well-to-do ranchers on the Flathead Reservation north of Missoula. (The Allards played an important role in the preservation of the North American
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8.2 A letter to Emma from her mother, Nellie Minesinger, January 1895. It was kept in Emma’s personal archive of treasured documents. Nellie would have dictated this letter. Courtesy of Jean Ensminger.

8.3 Emma and her second husband, Andy Magee, c. 1920s. Andy wears a beaded buckskin shirt, with a rose design, made by Emma. Courtesy of Jean Ensminger.
bison, acquiring and nurturing the Pablo-Allard herd, part of which was purchased by the Canadian government in 1907 for Buffalo National Park. *Montana Memories* contains a section on the history of the bison range on the Flathead Reservation.39 Emma was the Allard’s housekeeper, and Andy the hired man, but at roundup time, she drove the chuck wagon and cooked for the cowhands over a campfire. In 1897, Emma and Andy were living in Ronan, Montana, also on the Flathead Reservation, where Andy cut wood and Emma worked in a café. They wanted a ranch of their own on the reservation but were denied permission by the Indian agents. Although *Montana Memories* claims that this was because Andy was not permitted to reside on the reservation (“My Flathead blood gave me the right to reside on the reserve, but not my white husband”), it was actually Emma’s rights that were not recognized, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs as officials at this time were only aware of her Shoshone background.40 Instead, they purchased a ranch up the Lolo Pass, twenty miles southwest of Missoula.

In 1902, Emma learned that her son Jimmy Waymack, age fourteen, the boy left alone on the prairie by his father over seven years earlier, was in an orphan’s home in Nelson, British Columbia. She was overjoyed, and sent him the money to travel by rail to Missoula. Just at that time, her son Peter fell ill with Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a lethal disease spread by ticks, and he died ten days later. Emma then welcomed her only child home, but their happiness was brief. Jimmy and Andy did not get along, and “Before the summer passed, I knew that neither Andy nor I could cope with the unruliness of my fourteen year old boy.”41 They sent him to an “Indian training school” in Salem, Oregon, for four years, and he then enlisted in the army. He died in 1920 while stationed in the Philippines as a result of injuries sustained by falling from a tree. The letter informing Emma of his death was also kept in her personal archive.

Returning to the Flathead Reservation in 1908, Emma claimed her right to an allotment of eighty acres. In *Montana Memories*, little explanation is given of the allotment process, and there is no hint of the controversy surrounding its application on the Flathead Reservation, which was originally set aside under the 1855 Hell Gate Treaty with the Salish, the Kootenai, and the Pend d’Oreille.42 Under the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act, reservation land was divided into 80- or 160-acre units to be allotted to those who had the legal right to reside on a reservation. The remaining reservation land was then declared surplus and sold to non-Indian settlers. The allotment system was intended to eradicate “tribalism,” to enhance individuality through private ownership and to open up “unused”
reservation land to outsiders. Reservation land dwindled dramatically as a result of allotment in severalty. If Emma had been married to another member of the Flathead or allied nation, she would not have been entitled to her own allotment, as her husband would have been regarded as the entitled family head. But according to U.S. federal Indian law, “an Indian woman, although married to a White man, was head of her family and . . . her children who maintained their tribal relations were entitled to allotments as members of the tribe.”\textsuperscript{43} Allotment was applied to the Flathead Reservation beginning in 1904, partly in response to pressure mainly from non-Indian politicians and businessmen concerned about the loss of Montana’s population to Canada.\textsuperscript{44} Opening up the reservation’s 1.4 million acres of land meant farms, businesses, and homes for thousands of new settlers. While the majority of the Aboriginal residents of the reservation did not support allotment, they had no voice in the decision-making process. Their attempts to be heard through letters and delegations to Washington were ignored.\textsuperscript{45} The allotments were made and in 1910, the rest of the reservation was thrown open to outsiders.

Emma chose her allotment eight miles north of St. Ignatius in the Mission Valley on Post Creek. Other family members were among the original allottees of 1908.\textsuperscript{46} Many of the Alberta Minesingers and Miles gravitated to the Flathead Reservation. Emma’s mother Nellie was granted an allotment, and had a half interest in the allotment of her second husband, Nazaire Finley, after his death in 1913. (Nellie married Finley about four years after the death of James Minesinger.) A 1913 letter to Emma from the Indian Agent at the Flathead Reservation informed her that the sale of Nazaire Finley’s allotment would provide Nellie with “sufficient funds for her support during the greater part of her lifetime,” and that Nellie could apply for a patent for her own allotment as well.\textsuperscript{47} Rancher and Bar U cowhand Henry Minesinger moved his family from Alberta to the Flathead Reservation following the death of his first wife in 1900. In 1904, Henry married Eliza Finley, also a Flathead Reservation resident, and together they had seven children. According to family genealogist Walter K. Miles, all sixteen of these children received allotments.\textsuperscript{48} Other family members, including two of the children of Emma’s sister Mary and her husband Alfred Miles, James Miles and Mary Samantha Miles, received Métis scrip in Canada.\textsuperscript{49}

\textit{Montana Memories} establishes that Emma’s life of hard work was not over once she had her allotment. She “assisted with the outdoor work as well as attending to my household duties. Rising at dawn, I returned to the many tasks which had been left unfinished at dusk.”\textsuperscript{50} In 1909, a
daughter, Hazel Louise, was born to Emma and Andy. This was Emma’s fifth child (perhaps sixth), and the first to be delivered by a doctor. Hazel was Emma’s only child to survive past young adulthood, to marry, and to make Emma a grandmother. *Montana Memories* then diverts into a detailed account of Hazel’s years at the Ursuline mission boarding school in St. Ignatius on the Flathead Reservation, apparently quoting Hazel directly. The final two chapters sweep through Emma’s last years. She sold her allotment in 1918, just at the start of nearly a decade of dry years in Montana, and she and Andy moved to St. Ignatius where they purchased two town lots. In Emma’s will, made in 1914, her allotment was valued at four thousand dollars. She and Andy were beginning to drift apart. In her 1914 will, Emma left her allotment to her daughter Hazel, and she left one dollar each to her husband Andy and son Jimmy. Andy increasingly found “employment and interests elsewhere.” When in 1922 Andy took their daughter to spend a winter with his relatives in Pennsylvania, Emma was frightened that they would not return. This is the first direct mention made of discrimination: “I spent the winter alone. The barrier of my Indian blood, I believed, forever separated me from my husband’s people.”

Emma’s daughter Hazel attended the Sherman Indian High School at Riverside, California, beginning her long association with that State. (Her daughter Jean remembered that her mother was very unhappy about having been sent there.) Hazel then attended business college in Spokane and was working as a stenographer in St. Ignatius when she married Henry Raymond, also of the Flathead Reservation. Raymond was in the Navy and they settled at San Pedro, California. Emma and Andy were well off enough to assist Hazel and Henry to build a home in California, and also built a house next door for themselves. Andy lived there only briefly but Emma stayed in California for five years, from 1935 to 1940. Granddaughter Jean remembers this time with great pleasure, as she lived with her grandmother, learning skills such as how to hook rugs “the Indian way,” and Emma told her many Coyote stories. Emma “spoiled” her only granddaughter with toys and other presents, also making beautiful beadwork clothing for her. But according to *Montana Memories*, “nostalgia for my old friends and former home became overwhelming” and she returned to Montana, first living in her St. Ignatius home, which she then sold and lived with friends and family. For a time Emma lived with Ida Patterson, according to granddaughter Jean. In the brief final chapter called “Montana’s Shifting Scene,” Emma recalls and reviews the monumental changes she saw in her lifetime. Emma died in 1950 on the Flathead Reservation.
While Emma’s life is presented in *Montana Memories*, the voice is seldom if ever actually hers, despite the fact that it is written in the first person. Her granddaughter Jean is adamant that it does not reflect the way Emma spoke or wrote. Emma’s own undated, handwritten five-page memoir, which starts with her own birth and ends shortly after the birth of her second child James Francis, is an indication of the extent to which *Montana Memories* was a creation of Ida Patterson. In these five pages Emma skimmed over the many topics that are dealt with in the first seventeen chapters of the manuscript that became *Montana Memories*.

One passage in Emma’s own words, compared with the version presented in *Montana Memories* provides an idea of how Patterson clipped some details, added others, and altered Emma’s voice. Describing her trip with Thomas Waymack in the fall of 1883 back to Montana from High River Emma wrote:

Came across the Rocky mountain range came through the Crows Nest Pass on Horse back and led a pack horse most of the time and it was a rough trip no road and a dim trail my horse had to jump over trees that fell across the trail and a little snow fell at nites making the trail slippery in most places. And there was a cougher followed us most of the time early in the morning we could track him ahead of us then his track would be no more until next morning. Then there it would be again. We crossed over some high rugged mountains and saw many wild game mountain’s sheep and goats deer and many small animals coyotes and wolf. And fur bearing animals. We crossed the Oldmans River forded several large rivers. Then we came to the Border line between Canada + USA. 10 days of hard traveling we were in Tobacco Plains.

Patterson’s version from *Montana Memories* trims most of these details but adds others:

This time we traveled southwest, following a trail through the Crows Nest Pass. Riding along the trail through this mountain gorge, we came upon a magnificent pair of mountain sheep horns lying directly in our path. We judged they measured nearly five feet from tip to tip. Thrust though their spiraled beauty was a long pole. Evidently two persons, the hunters perhaps, had endeavored to convey them to some distant point. We dismounted
and lingered a few moments speculating about those who no doubt wished to display this splendid trophy of their hunt. We crossed the Canadian border on an old Indian trail which led us southward into Tobacco Plains. For hundreds of years this ancient highway had thudded to the hoofs of Indian ponies bearing their riders to war and to the hunt.55

Another example is Emma’s own description of her first husband and marriage: “Then I got married to a man almost a stranger to me he was a cruel inhuman person I took his abuse for eleven years.”56 Ida’s version—“As the sixteen year old wife of this arrogant ex-soldier I was to find the complexities of life increased fourfold”—is in a very different voice.57

In Emma’s own five-page narrative the term I is used more often when describing her many jobs, while Patterson tended to use we, assuming the work was most often done with a husband. For example, Emma wrote of the pack train operation at Thompson Falls, “I had 5 horses and I started a small pack train. I worked hard and packed those horses from Thompson Fall [sic] into Murray Idaho. Walked in mud up to my knees and packed my baby on my back. When we arrived at our destination and cargo distributed I would take the horses to the packers corell unsaddle them fed and water them while my husband collected for the cargo.”58 Ida’s version is rather different: “Arriving in the busy town with five horses, we purchased two others. Before the summer was over we bought three more. . . . It was nightfall when we reached Murray. After disposing of our load, we went to our cabin. My husband fed and watered the pack string, while I prepared our evening meal.”59 If there is a pattern to Patterson’s reconfiguration of Emma’s life, it is to make her appear more refined, domestic, reflective and “ladylike” than is suggested in Emma’s own five-page account.

Ida Patterson was an aspiring writer, and Montana Memories was her main creation and achievement. Born in Alberta in 1903, she was the daughter of Mary Samantha Miles, the second child and oldest daughter of Emma’s sister Mary and Alfred Miles.60 (As mentioned earlier, Mary Samantha Miles took Métis scrip in Canada.) Ida’s father was Joseph Smith, from Pincher Creek, Alberta. Joseph’s father Charles Smith was Scandinavian, and his mother Marie Rose Delorme (1861–1960) was Métis, originally from the Red River Settlement (see Figure 8.4). Although Marie Rose had seventeen children, she found time later in her life to write, publishing her memoirs “Eighty Years on the Plains,” which included events in the history of the Pincher Creek district, in instalments
Marie Rose (Delorme) Smith with her husband, Charles Smith, and their daughter Mary Ann, c. 1890s. The Smiths, who were ranchers at Pincher Creek, Alberta, were Ida Smith Patterson’s grandparents. Courtesy of the Glenbow Archives, NA-2539-1.
in the *Canadian Cattleman*. The manuscript is in Calgary’s Glenbow Archives, and it is similar in many ways to Patterson’s narrative of Emma’s life. Emma and Marie Rose shared a great deal. They were born five years apart, lived on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border, were married at age sixteen, lost many children, and lived well into the twentieth century. Both narratives deal with the boundary culture of people of mixed ancestry who lived on both sides of the 49th parallel. Both describe lives characterized by movement and change, until Marie Rose settled on her ranch and Emma on her allotment. Hard work was a constant in both their lives and for both, knowledge from their Aboriginal ancestry permitted them to survive on the land. Both women sewed for a living and created beautiful beadwork designs. The memoirs of both women are imbued with nostalgia, but both are candid about the difficulties of their married lives. Both could be read as political statements about identity, as the stories of their lives articulate the depth and importance of their mixed-ancestry cultural heritage, although the sense of a distinct identity seems much sharper for Marie Rose.

It is possible that Ida Patterson’s grandmother, writer Marie Rose Smith, inspired her to write the life of her great aunt Emma. But Ida may not have known her grandmother Marie Rose. Ida and her family moved to Polson on the Flathead Reservation when she was a young girl, and her parents divorced in 1911. Joseph, who had been a barber in Polson, returned to Pincher Creek, Alberta, after the divorce and died in 1914. Ida’s mother Mary married Dave Patterson in 1916 and they had one daughter, Grace. Ida grew up on the Flathead Reservation, attended the Ursuline School in St. Ignatius, just a few years before Hazel’s years at the same institution, described at such length in *Montana Memories*. Likely some of Ida’s own memories of the school are included in the narrative. After high school, she attended business college in Spokane, like Hazel, but at the age of seventeen, she became afflicted with rheumatism, forcing her to spend much of her time sitting or lying in bed. According to her half-sister Grace Patterson McComas, Ida loved to write and she published other poems and articles. She took notes from Emma, according to McComas, and wrote “until way into the night. Sometimes she would become so stiff she could hardly move.”

Aside from rephrasing and re-organizing Emma’s memories, Ida Patterson added a great deal of context from secondary sources, providing all sorts of information about the early history of Montana, including such diverse topics as the first farmers, the Chinese workers, and the demise
of the buffalo. Passages such as this indicate Patterson’s aspirations as a writer and they clearly signal that Emma’s voice is altered and muted in the memoir: “At last the hushed Indian summer days came and went, but the hunting parties came no more. Over the silent, grass-grown trail only phantom Indians rode. No longer did the great plains re-echo to the pounding of thundering hoof.” \(^{66}\) In *Montana Memories* there is a great deal of detail on Alfred Miles, Patterson’s own grandfather, including his adventures as a volunteer wagon train teamster during the Nez Perce War, and later how he carried the mail by pony express from Missoula to Plains, Montana.\(^{67}\)

Another version of *Montana Memories*, entitled “In the Shadow of the Shining Mountains,” dated 1946 to 1950 and written under the name Ida Pearl Smith, was located by family genealogist Walter K. Miles.\(^{68}\) The conclusion indicates that it was written while Emma was living in California, as the Emma of this version yearns to return to the Flathead Reservation “in spite of her daughter’s solicitude . . . to spend the evening of her life in the shadow of the Shining Mountains.” Unlike *Montana Memories*, it is written in the third person—in Patterson’s voice—describing the life of Emma. Much is the same, but there are also details that do not appear in *Montana Memories*, including the story of Emma visiting her grandmother Strong Old Woman (Mrs. Carlos Monteray) when she was living in an encampment near Victor: “The ancient grandmother, brown and wrinkled, always welcomed her young granddaughter. The old woman lived much in the past, and often talked to Emma of those bygone days. Her favorite story was of Sacajawea, the Bird Woman of Lewis and Clark fame. Strong Old Woman claimed some blood relationship to the Shoshone guide.” Toward the end there is a lengthy account of a dream that Emma had while a patient in the hospital at St. Ignatius, recovering from appendicitis, that does not appear in *Montana Memories*. The devil appears to Emma and warns her about five people who wished to deceive her and rob her of her happiness. It seems that Patterson dearly wanted her great aunt to return to the Flathead Reservation. Ida Patterson died in 1954, just four years after Emma, at age fifty-two.

Without Patterson’s determination to write about Emma we would likely not have more than the five pages of memoir Emma herself wrote, which she ended just at the most tragic time in her life. Patterson clearly extracted much more detail from Emma, and the result is a collaboration that is an invaluable, rare record of the life of a borderlands woman, despite the interventions and embellishments. It belongs in studies and collections of Native American women’s life writing, with the understanding that, like all
A beaded bag made by Emma. Emma’s beaded bags reflect Plateau designs, although not exclusively. Courtesy of Jean Ensminger.
Another example of Emma’s beaded bags. Courtesy of Jean Ensminger.
8.7 Buckskin beaded jacket, made by Emma. The wild rose featured prominently in Emma’s beadwork. Courtesy of Jean Ensminger.

8.8 A beaded bag for powwows and ceremonies, made by Emma. Courtesy of Jean Ensminger.
collaborations such as this, it represents a fragment of Emma’s life, and that it contains a good deal by and about Patterson as well. Montana Memories however, is a unique variant of the Native American “as-told-to” autobiography. They were usually solicited, recorded, re-written, and edited by a non-Aboriginal person—an Indian agent or anthropologist. The “informant” and the “collaborator” were from two distinct cultures and the result was a “bicultural document,” the “ground on which two cultures meet,” “the textual equivalent of the frontier.” The “informant” must fashion herself in a foreign language for an alien dominant culture, represented by the “collaborator.” But Ida Patterson did not represent an alien dominant culture, as she was part of this mixed-ancestry boundary culture, and in writing about Emma, Patterson was writing her own family history.

Another rich and enduring legacy of Emma’s life is found in her striking beadwork and in the garments and moccasins that are but a small sampling of the enormous quantity she must have made during her lifetime. Emma was a worker in an industry that produced essential clothing and footwear for family members but that was also sold throughout a vast network of trading posts and camps all over the West. According to Montana Memories, she learned sewing and beadwork from her mother, so the Shoshone influence may have been important, but designs, patterns, and garments altered rapidly in the late nineteenth century world as new influences were absorbed, and in response to market demands. In the photograph of the Minesinger family from the mid-1890s (see Figure 8.1), Emma’s mother Nellie is wearing beaded gauntlets with geometric designs, most prominently a cross that might indicate the four directions. The gauntlets suggest a combination of an older tradition and new influences. Until about 1900 geometric designs characterized Shoshone beadwork but by the 1870s there began a turn to floral motifs that eventually predominated. Ideas for floral patterns were acquired from all over,
including the lacework and needlepoint of Roman Catholic nuns and seed catalogues, as well as the flowers from their own environment, such as the mountain roses. Today the “Shoshone Rose” is a recognized symbol at modern powwows. Nellie’s gauntlets, with heavily embellished cuffs, reflect new influences and market demands, as these were not part of the traditional repertoire of garments. Demand for beaded gloves or gauntlets was high among settlers who regarded these as essential “cowboy” or western dress.73

Emma’s beadwork reflects a variety of influences including Salish, Shoshone, and Nez Perce. The defining features of her work are the floral motifs, and while she created many imaginative designs, of these the rose is the most prominent (see Figures 8.5 to 8.7). The fragrant pink and prickly wild rose inhabits all of Emma’s territory, the borderlands of Montana and Alberta (and is the official floral emblem of that province), and it is found in the mountains as well as the prairies. Like Emma, the wild rose disregarded local and national borders. This is the beadwork of the borderlands. Despite the upheavals of her life, and her attachments to both the Aboriginal and settler worlds, Emma’s Aboriginal heritage remained paramount. Her beadwork, learned from her mother and passed on to her descendants, is a tangible link to this heritage.

Understanding Emma Minesinger—made possible by the co-produced narrative of her life, her own five-page memoir, the documents in
her personal archive, the memories of her descendants, and her beadwork—opens up new ways of thinking about identity, community, and nation. Emma, her extended family and other people of the borderlands defied and complicated boundaries and categories. She disturbs and haunts the unity and coherence of nationalist histories, which forget the presence and the narratives of marginalized peoples of the borderlands. By leaving these records of her life, which constitute a powerful counter-narrative, Emma challenges and intervenes in our understanding of boundaries and borders in the history of the North American West.