

Longer Bio, Liza Bakewell

Liza Bakewell was born in Hartford, Connecticut, where she lived until her family moved to Huron, Ohio, on the southern shore of Lake Erie, when she was twelve years old. After Ohio, she moved to the canyons of Colorado, the suburbs of New York, the East Side of Providence, a few places in Los Angeles, downtown Mexico City (D.F.), five hours south of D.F. in the valley of Oaxaca, and now, for the past fourteen-and-counting years, the coast of Maine, where, beginning in 2014, after leaving her academic position in Rhode Island of 22 years, she writes from her home office or a local coffee shop after dropping her daughters off at school each morning.

Bakewell graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1979 with a B.A. in performing arts and anthropology. She earned her Ph.D. in anthropology from Brown University in 1991. She joined the faculty at Brown in 1992, where she stayed on the faculty for 22 years, first as teaching faculty, and then as research faculty. She has taught courses at Brown as well as at Bowdoin College and Colgate University in the areas of linguistic anthropology, gender and language, art and aesthetics, art and politics, material culture, religion, and women's studies. On occasion she teaches at other campuses in the guise of a visiting professor. In 2014 she became the executive director of Maine Women Write, an organization that promotes the works of Maine women writers.

Between 1992 and 2015, Bakewell published broadly -- articles and book reviews in academic journals, chapters in edited books, edited and co-authored books with university presses, creative non-fiction with W.W. Norton, a CD ROM, an educational website (mesolore.org), grant proposals, and electronic articles with institutions and venues that range from the National Science Foundation to *Words Without Borders: The Online Magazine for International Literature*.

In 1995 Bakewell, with funds from the National Science Foundation, began The Mesolore Project (TMP), a research and educational software project on Mesoamerican writing systems, manuscripts, and history, from both the pre- and post-Cortés periods. In 1996 she moved TMP from the Department of Anthropology to the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) when then CLACS director and noted scholar Dr. Thomas Skidmore offered her and TMP affiliation and space. Under Bakewell's directorship and in collaboration with Dr. Byron Hamann, TMP earned 1.5+ million dollars of funding from the National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Davis Educational Foundation.

On January 26, 2001, she gave birth to twin girls, Jennie Woodhouse Bakewell and Avery Oakleaf Bakewell. (Those names, if you are wondering, are old family names that referenced, at one time, professions, outdoor markets and water wells).

In fall 2010, Bakewell and TMP launched *Mesolore: The Cyber Center for Research and Teaching on Mesoamerica*, nine years after their CD ROM publication, *Mesolore: Exploring Mesoamerican Cultures*, which Scholarly Resources, Inc. distributed (and later Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.). In 2012, Mesolore's cyber center became simply: mesolore.org.

Between 2003-2007, Bakewell took three writing workshops, one with cartoonist Lynda Barry, another with poet Sharon Olds, and a third with memoirist and fiction writer Abigail Thomas, after which she began to dedicate the early morning of each day to writing literary

non-fiction and poetry. In 2007, Bakewell published her first poem, *The Cacique*, in 2007 with *Anthropology and Humanism*, the flagship journal of the Society for Humanistic Anthropology, which awarded the poem a third-place prize in its poetry contest. Since then she has written more poems for a collection she tentatively titles: *Up before dawn* (or *Halting the Great World from Spinning*).

On August 9, 2009, Bakewell's daughter, Avery, published a collection of short poems in *El Imparcialito*, the Sunday supplement of the leading newspaper, *El Imparcial*, Oaxaca, Mexico. They were written and published in Spanish. (They don't translate very well!)

In 2010, after five years of crack-of-dawn writing, Bakewell finished a book in English on the Spanish language, *Madre: Perilous Journeys with a Spanish Noun*. It was published with the independent literary press W. W. Norton & Company, Inc (copyright 2011). In the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011, Bakewell read and discussed *Madre* in venues across the U.S.

June 2010 she edited *Hamilton in Haiku*, a book of poems (written by Avery) and photographs (taken by Jennie) on her daughters' experiences living in Hamilton, N.Y., for six months, January – June, 2010. Four books were printed in the First Printing. One is in the Hamilton Public Library.

February 2012 A paperback version of *Madre: Perilous Journeys with a Spanish Noun* came out with University of New Mexico Press. The press designed an awesome new cover for it. The President of the UNM Press, John Byram, was the director of education at Norton before joining the UNM Press. *Madre* was a finalist for the New Mexico-Arizona Book Award and was submitted to the National Book Critics Circle Award.

In 2015 Bakewell published, *A Gateless Garden: Quotes by Maine Women Writers*, a Maine Women Write book. She collected the quotes over a two-year period with assistant Meygan Lackey, an undergraduate at Brown University. Kerry Michaels, Maine photographer and award-winning documentary filmmaker, collaborated with Bakewell on the project. An exhibit, curated by Bakewell and Michaels, of 53 of the quotes and photographs opened to the public at the University of the New England's Art Gallery, on January 20, 2015. It closed on April 12, 2015.

In 2015 Bakewell began her first novel, which is based on a true story about a zany childcare situation. She continues to direct Maine Women Write and live with her, now, teenage daughters.

Awards

Fulbright Fellowship, U.S. Fulbright-García-Robles Program, Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, U.S.-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange

In 2008, based on her proposal *Madre: Tales of a Mexican Noun: A Prismatic and Microcosmic Study of Language and Culture*, Bakewell was awarded a Fulbright (2008-09), making it possible for her to move to Oaxaca, Mexico, with her family, and research and write the final chapters of *Madre*. It also provided time for her to research key texts and sites for The Mesolore Project's new website, www.mesolore.net.

Principal Investigator, National Science Foundation (NSF)

In 2008, based on Bakewell's proposal, "Expanding Mesolore" (#DUE-0817114, 9/2008-9/2011), the NSF awarded her \$235,018 for TMP.

Project Director, Davis Educational Foundation

In 2008, based on her proposal "Integrating Primary Document Research into Introductory-level Classrooms," Davis awarded her \$173,762 (5/2008-5/2011).

Project Director, National Endowment for the Humanities

In 2008, NEH awarded "Expanding Mesolore: Adding Two, Pedagogically-Interactive Aztec Documents to an Interdisciplinary Project for Teaching and Learning Mesoamerica" \$119,630 (EE-50582-08, 5/2008-5/2010).

Third Place, Anthropology-Poetry Contest, Society for Humanistic Anthropology

In 2007, for her poem, "The Cacique." She read her poem at the 108th Annual American Anthropological Association meeting, Washington, D.C., November, 2007.

Principal Investigator, National Science Foundation

In 2004, the NSF awarded Bakewell's proposal "Disseminating Mesolore" (#DUE-0341415) \$294,665 (2004-2007).

Principal Investigator, National Science Foundation

In 1999, the NSF awarded "Mesolore," (#DUE- 99-50883, 1999-2002) \$150,000, which it supplemented in 2002 with \$28,000.

Project Director, Ford Foundation

In 2000, Ford awarded "Mesolore" (#1000-1995) \$125,000 (Sept. 2000 - Aug. 2001).

Project Director, Ford Foundation

In 1998, Ford awarded "Mesolore: A Model for Multicultural Education and Asynchronous Learning" (DUE#980-1247/1) \$50,000, which was renewed with \$75,000.

Principal Investigator, National Science Foundation

In 1997, the NSF awarded "Auroch: The Origins of Speech and Gesture" (#DUE-9652791) \$151,610 (3/1997-3/1999). (A portion of Auroch spun off, later, as Mesolore).

Project Director, Ford Foundation

In 1996, Ford awarded "Mesolore: Mesoamerican Lore Through Mesoamerican Writing: Bridging Contemporary Contexts with Ancient Texts" \$75,000.

Principal Investigator, National Science Foundation

In 1995, the NSF awarded "Vision and Voice: Rethinking Human Communication" (#DUE-9455587) \$123,680, which it supplemented with another \$27,500 (3/1995-12/1996).

Faculty Enhancement/Course Development Grant, Wayland Collegium, Brown University

In 1994, Brown awarded Bakewell \$5,000 to run a public conference, "The Language-Art Interface."

Faculty Research Grant, Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Institute for International Studies, Brown

In 1993, Brown awarded Bakewell a travel grant to conduct ethnographic and archival research, Fall 1994, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on the 1984 film *Camila*, by Argentine filmmaker María Luisa Bemberg. Bakewell, along with her colleague and former student, Tamara Gould, conducted one of the last, if not the last, interview with the filmmaker before she died, shortly thereafter, of cancer.

Dissertation Fellowship, Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies

Bakewell was awarded a year-long writing grant for 1988-89.

Co-Principal Investigator, National Science Foundation Dissertation Research Grant

In 1987, based on her proposal "Mexico: An Anthropological Approach to Modern Art" (#BNS 8711758), the NSF awarded Bakewell money to conduct doctoral dissertation research in Mexico City.

Fulbright Fellowship, Dissertation Enhancement

In 1987, the Fulbright program awarded funds to help cover Bakewell's dissertation research on art and politics in Mexico City, post 1968 (1987-88; 18 months).

University Scholarships, Brown University

1982, 1985, 1990, Bakewell received full tuition with teaching assistantships while a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology.

Principal Investigator, Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities Grant with a Rhode Island Heritage Commission Matching Grant

In 1983 Bakewell received funds for an exhibition on Tewa Pueblos of New Mexico, "A Sense of Order," Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University.