Place-names are part of the vocabulary of speakers of English as well as an important category of proper nouns in print. Like the rest of the lexicon of English, place-names, spoken or written, have had a long history of change and development. Spellings of most of the general vocabulary have evolved toward a standardized form, with the letters of the alphabet in ideal cases paralleling the sounds of the spoken form. Nations employing the alphabet often aim toward a phonemic spelling of the word-stock, with one symbol or sequence of symbols representing one phoneme, or distinctive sound, despite the fact that many mismatches or anomalies may have been inherited in traditional spellings frozen in previous centuries. With its Anglo-Saxon and Romance roots and classical borrowings, the English language is especially noteworthy for its numerous exceptions to a close relationship between the sounds of the words and the letters of the spelled forms. This mismatch is one of the reasons why many dictionaries for schools, offices, and libraries record both the accepted spellings and the pronunciations of words (Collins 1987, American Heritage 1992, Canadian Oxford 1998).

Many specialists in both scholarly disciplines and administrative positions are involved with the subject of place-names. Each specialty brings its own aims and principles to the toponymic field. The approaches range from philologists interested in history and meaning to geographers and cartographers, bureaucrats interested in the standardization of spelling in the international context, linguists, dialectologists, folklorists and lexicographers, producers in local and national television corporations, and local history buffs and officials promoting local tourism; these widely differing techniques applied to the body of English place-names account for the astonishing variety of titles presented in References (see also Roberts 1958/59, Sealock and others 1982, Spittal & Field 1990).

Place-names are in some respects special in reference works other than dictionaries because they also appear on maps and in gazetteers where the purpose is to specify the standard spelling and the location on the earth's surface by spatial placement or indications of latitude and longitude. However, in the dictionaries there is customarily information on the pronunciations of geographical names either in the alphabetical sequence...
(American Heritage 1992) or in special sections devoted to names of various localities, natural features, and nations (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate 1997). Accepted pronunciations or variant pronunciations for important place-names can be found in scholarly dictionaries (Forster 1981) and commercial dictionaries (Merriam Webster’s Geographical Dictionary 1997). But for localized place-names of towns, cities, counties, states, provinces, and regions, it is more difficult to discover in public libraries information on what the satisfactory pronunciations of the names may be.

Standard pronunciation of place names is not easily defined, since there may be the commonly used pronunciation in the vicinity of a place and also in far distant places a spelling pronunciation distinct from the local one (A. Read 1933a, Hanill 1934, Allen 1958, Krueger 1962, Bailey 1994). The spelling of the place-name exerts a powerful influence because people respect fixed orthography and with their years of schooling they unconsciously employ a complex set of rules to interpret the values of letters and letter sequences in a place-name. This deference to spelling is most easily illustrated in English with the names of provinces and states and the egregious examples of places in Great Britain, for example Launceston and Edinburgh (Lloyd James 1936, CBC Handbook 1942, 1959, Miller 1971, Ehrlich & Hand 1984). Some writers have stated that the spoken forms used by local populations determine the standard (Ferguson 1943; Fayburn 1985), but at a great distance the force of the printed spelling outweighs the paltry influence of the usage by residents of a community who follow a fixed oral tradition rather than the local spelling (Gould 1975, other works in References). It is only when a person moves to a particular city that he can cast aside his earlier pronunciations based on spelling and imitate names as locals say them. This tension between localized practice and interpretations of place-names by speakers far away from the locale probably exists in languages other than English.

they transcribed the forms as they seemed to hear them, that is, in roughly phonemic spellings. These recorded names, in contrast to Spanish, French, or German loans, indicate by the spellings what the approximate pronunciations are; many New England names, for example Mattapoisett, Narragansett, Pemaquid, Winnipesaukee, and names in Hubbard (1883) and Gould (1975) hardly need repeated information on the pronunciation. It remains to be seen how non-native laymen will translate into speech some of the spelling changes being made in Hawaii (Pukui and others 1974) and the proposed place-names for Canadian First Nations which employ newly invented spelling systems with many added diacritic marks (Kerfoot 1991).

The printed form of a place-name such as Annieopsquotch Mountains, a Micmac derivative in western Newfoundland, provides some details about the spoken form of the name, but not all. As noted above, loans from indigenous languages into English tended to be recorded in an approximate phonemic form. However, speech has other sound features besides phonemic segments; some of these have been felt important enough to be marked in the pronunciation transcriptions after the main entry in a place-name dictionary. Pitch, loudness, intonation pattern, tone of voice, rate of speed, and an individual's speech quality, it is true, are ignored, but the patterns of emphasis on certain syllables (here called stresses) and possible cues to the syllables composing the name are sometimes marked in the pronunciation forms. Thus in Annieopsquotch, -op- receives the primary stress, and an- and -squotch bear secondary stresses. The remainder, any weaker syllables, are unmarked. A stressed syllable may be indicated in various ways by compilers of dictionaries. A superscript mark or a centered dot may be placed after the stressed syllable, or a mark placed before the stressed syllable, the syllable may be printed in capital letters or underlined, or various other typographical devices may signal the prominent syllable. The stress marks also may be slanted to the right, be vertical, be raised above the line of print, or for secondary stresses be lowered. As can be seen, there has been no uniformity in editors' practices. Beginning with William Kenrick's New Dictionary of the English Language in 1773 (Sheldon 1946, 35), compilers of pronouncing dictionaries apparently believed that breaking longer words into syllables, by inserting hyphens, centered dots, or a space, would assist readers in learning the pronunciations. An unfortunate result of this device (which admittedly does reveal the syllabic structure of words) may be the pronouncing of each syllable in isolation, thus producing a stilted utterance unlike that of a natural speaker. Compilers have also devised other graphic techniques, such as
placing parentheses around vowels that might be barely articulated or omitted and inserting an apostrophe to indicate a weak-stressed syllable: Biddeford - Biddy-f'd (Gould 1975, 329). Combining all these cues, a pronouncing dictionary might employ the method of respelling for Annieopsquotch: [an-ni-op-skwoch] or [an-ni-OP-skwoch].

Pronunciations of problematical place-names may be indicated in a variety of ways, usually by presenting a headword, or 'main entry', followed by a transcription in this study called 'second entry' (Sheldon 1946, 35-7). In historical surveys Emsley (1940) and Bronstein (1986) discussed a number of procedures followed by compilers of general pronouncing dictionaries. A common early one employed from the late eighteenth century to modern times makes use of alphabetical letters with an assortment of diacritics added, usually to the vowel symbols. These dots, straight and curved lines, italicized letters, numbers placed above letters, accent marks adopted from European languages (`, ', ^, `) and other signs are added onto letters to identify what specific phoneme each letter signals. This marking of letters in general dictionaries is an outgrowth of the numerous experiments of reformers of the alphabet during preceding centuries who desired to establish a more consistent spelling system for the instruction of the young and for printed books, one reflecting the pronunciations of those times (Pitman & St. John 1969, 308-15). Kindred diacritics placed on proper nouns in many editions of the Authorized Version of the Bible also inform readers of traditional pronunciations. A pronunciation key, since John Walker's dictionary of 1791 often printed on every page of the dictionary (Sheldon 1946, 41), presents each letter with its accompanying diacritic and ideally an unambiguous English word to serve as an illustration. Thus diacritics may discriminate the varying sounds of a in dab, save, father, carter, ball, and aroma, and similarly with the other vowels and certain consonants.

No one diacritic system, however, has ever become uniform in reference works although some common practices appear frequently. Many works employ the macron to mark a vowel often called long (ā, ē, ī, ō, ō), and the breve for vowels called short (ã), etc. Publishing firms have their particular traditional house systems of diacritic marking repeated from earlier editions and sometimes undergoing very slight modifications with new editions (Larce 1996, 70-1, 74): for example the mid-central vowel schwa /ə/ was adopted in The American College Dictionary of 1947 (Barnhart 1996, 121-2) and schwa and one symbol /ŋ/ for the customary ng were adopted in Webster's Third New International Dictionary of 1961 (Panel discussion 1998 [1989], 120). Each editor faces this problem of
symbolizing pronunciations anew and often will experiment with varied diacritical additions to letters in an effort to symbolize more precisely the details of the natural pronunciation of a word (Collins 1987, xii). Consequently information presented in the pronunciation key of each dictionary must be consulted to interpret the particular diacritic system employed. Developments in pronunciation keys being devised for online English dictionaries have not been investigated for the present study, which is limited to conventions in printed books.

A second common solution to the problem of illustrating how a word in standard spelling is to be pronounced—one especially widespread in place-name dictionaries—is respelling the headword, using the common letters of the alphabet, in a form aiming to be translatable into sound and unambiguous. In this system, also, a pronunciation guide is provided listing the key letters and letter combinations and ordinary words to illustrate the intended sound. For instance for the long vowels mentioned above respelling might offer such equivalents as ay, ee, eye, oe, and oo, and so on (Hudon 1987, 39; Baker 1995, 41). Respelling systems, devised by professionals and amateurs both, are probably even more multifarious than the diacritic systems. Certain types, bypassing use of a pronunciation key, indicate the pronunciation by giving a rime-word (Bald Nap 1918, Casey Jones 1938, Holt 1938, McDavid 1951, Rayburn 1984), creating a limerick (Loomis 1954, Neuffer 1983, 104), or providing an ordinary sentence containing words pronounced like the place-name: Nashua, N.H.—‘May I cash you a check?’ ‘Cash away’ (Holt 1938); Nerepis, N.B.—narrow peas (Ganong 1896, 256); (CBC Guide 1959, Gould 1975).

A third transcription system for recording a pronunciation is the scientific scheme devised by the International Phonetic Association after its founding in 1886 and revised periodically since that time (Conference Papers 1998 [1989], 136-7, Handbook of the International Phonetic Association 1999). It too is based on the Roman alphabet (with a number of Greek letters) and includes in addition many of the alphabetic letters modified in shape, size, and presentation (inversion, reversal), together with a large number of optional diacritics to indicate various types of speech sounds. All the symbols are defined with reference to articulatory positions in the mouth and throat, and the system attempts to provide an array of symbols to represent the distinctive sounds of any of the languages of the world, not just the languages of western European nations. The practical purpose of the IPA alphabet was at one time mainly to describe the phonology of any language, but its finely graded symbols have been especially useful in recording dialectal sounds, for example by field-
workers engaged in the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* (1939-43) and its associated projects and Harold Orton's *Survey of English Dialects* (1962-1971); it was recommended for the use of the American Dialect Society (Wilson 1944). In dictionaries, both general and toponymic, the IPA can furnish a standardized transcription system enabling any reader familiar with the scheme to identify the pronunciation of the headword or a foreign term.

The principles and various practices of indicating the pronunciations of the English vocabulary in dictionaries can of course be found in place-name reference works which include pronunciations, along with the geographical, etymological, and anecdotal information presented by the compilers. The data on pronunciation can range from authoritative broad transcriptions derived from programs of fieldwork to approximate or even prescriptive pronunciation forms offered by popular authors unaware of the complexities of variant pronunciations of residents in an area. Book titles and introductory notes concerning pronunciations in a dictionary reveal some of the difficulties of presenting the phonemic equivalents in the second entry as the authors use terms like *acceptable, local, correct, widespread, usual, preferred, customary, normal*, and so on (A. Read 1933a, Wheeler & Phillips 1963, Laborde 1976, Neuffer & Neuffer 1983, Rayburn 1985). Usually the compilers imply that the selected forms are pronunciation; used in ordinary conversation or in public address by regional speakers with some degree of education and culture, not over-precise and finicky, but also not careless and slipshod. The compilers' pronunciations, after all, are declared to be authentic and authoritative, even if not based on tape recordings and extensive sampling. Usually the reliability of the pronunciation data can be recognized by noting the contrast between an *ad hoc* respelling system and a fully explained diacritic or phonemic system. The examples selected in the appendix to the present study have been chosen to illustrate the variety of pronunciation keys, and should not necessarily be counted on as faithful records of local usage.

As with publishers of standard dictionaries, writers on place-names who provide information on pronunciation fall into two groups: those who trust that a respelling system is more comprehensible to the presumptive readership—to the public—and those who perceive that a more scientific transcript on system, specifically the International Phonetic Alphabet, more meaningfully and accurately records the pronunciations of place-names. The two approaches might be termed the popular and the technical or scholarly. It is noteworthy that a number of recent compilers
introduce parallel transcriptions drawn from both systems (Hudon 1987; Bollard and others 1993; see Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate 1997, 32a-35a).

The aim of a compiler in selecting one of the pronunciation systems is to provide users of the dictionary with information on the pronunciation or variant pronunciations of the main entry. In the introductory material the editor describes the chosen system at length, with an appended key listing vowel and consonant symbols and illustrative words, and the respelling system is often promoted with remarks that suggest that this approach will be more effective than other systems in presenting the information. These remarks stress that the pronunciation key is simple, direct, readily understood by the consulter. Bollard for example writes, ‘A simplified pronunciation system [in this work] uses ordinary letters or combinations of letters to represent sounds’ (1993, xiii). Another phrasing is, ‘The following key was designed to indicate the majority of speech sounds in a simple and comprehensible manner’ (Elster 1999, xiv). Two observations might be made: probably very many users of the work do not readily understand the system adopted in the dictionary, even if it is called ‘simple’, and furthermore do not consult the extended discussion of the pronunciation key in the front matter. In effect, the editor is asserting that the scheme adopted in the dictionary has no strange symbols not already familiar to the reader in the common English alphabet. The key may utilize unconventional sequences of vowels and consonants and numerous diacritic marks added to the letters, but the reader need not be put off, it is implied, by cryptic letter shapes—‘minute, arcane characters and symbols’, writes Elster (1999, xiv)—devised for the science of phonetics.

The transcription of either principal kind in the second entry will be successful in its purpose only if it leads the consulter to pronounce a fairly close approximation of the name in his own dialect or accent. A phonemic transcription of a place-name cannot induce a speaker to use sounds and make distinctions not found in his speech system. For instance many speakers of English do not have a perceptible contrast in the words Don and Dawn ([a] and [ɔ]); many major dialects do not use an [r] in names like Dartmouth and Poplar Bluff. What a recorded pronunciation does do in a place-name dictionary is present an abstract phonemic form of the name. It abstracts from the actual examples spoken by residents of a community, whatever its size, and it prompts users of the dictionary to say a roughly equivalent form in their own individual and regional dialect. The phonemic match of the name as between the source speakers and the listeners may not be a perfect one, but the intermediary pronunciation transcription does insure the kind of rough equivalence which, as in many aspects of
spoken communication, allows the place-name to be understood and to be acceptable as a message by the listeners. As Max Müller declared, 'Writing was never intended to photograph spoken languages; it was meant to indicate, not to paint, sounds' (cited in Pitman & St. John 1969, 84).

APPENDIX

The appearance of some of the modes of indicating pronunciations of place-names may be illustrated, following the stages of progress noted by Emsley (1940); see also the detailed diacritic respellings from 1845 to the 1930s cited in Mot; (1925) and A. Read (1933b, 29-31).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accents without respelling (Hubbard 1883).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chusun'cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madawas'ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Penob'scot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diacritic respelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>(Hubbard 1833)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abòcadnè'ticook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nâmök’anök</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nolle'semic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tomhë’gan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>(CBC 1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maugerville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miramichi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musquodoboit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nipissing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>(ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assiniboine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israel</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Accents without respelling (Hubbard 1883).

2. Diacritic respelling.

A. (Hubbard 1833)

B. (CBC 1959)

C. (ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary 1997)

Assiniboine

Israel
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>[mi-əmˈeɪ, -əmˈæ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlothian</td>
<td>[mɪd-ləˈθi-ən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehran or Teheran</td>
<td>[tɛˈə-rənˈ, -rənˈ, tɛ-rənˈ, -rənˈ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Phonetic respelling**

A. (adapted from Gould 1975)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arundel</td>
<td>[Uh-RUN-dˈl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calais</td>
<td>'a cross between callous and careless'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesuncook</td>
<td>[ChˈSUN-cook]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medomak</td>
<td>[Muh-DOM-mˈk]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>[PEM-brook]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piscataqua, and Piscataquis</td>
<td>[Piss-KAT-uh-kwaw], and [Piss-KAT-uh-kwiss]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. (Bollard and others 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boise, Id.</td>
<td>[BOI-sē (local pron.), BOI-zē]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>[KAR-uh-BĒ-uhn, kuh-RİB-ē -uhn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>[shuh-KAHG-ō, shuh-KAW-gō, chuh-]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena, Mt.</td>
<td>[HEL-uh-nuh]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>[KAW-suh-vō]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>[MIS-(uh-)ˌSIP-ē]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montpelier, Vt.</td>
<td>[mahnt-PELL-yuhr]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Augustine, Fl.</td>
<td>[SĀNT AW-guhs-TEN, suhnt ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>[WAWSH-ing-tuhn, WAHSH-ing-tuhn, esp. in US Midlands WAWR-shing-tuhn, WAHR-shing-tuhn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willamette, Or.</td>
<td>[wuh-LAM-uht]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnipesaukee, N.H.</td>
<td>[WIN-uh-puh-SAW-kē, -SAHK-ē]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4. International Phonetic respelling

#### A. (W. Read 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee</td>
<td>[tʃeɾo'ki:]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotaco</td>
<td>[ko'te:ko]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh</td>
<td>[tʃɪkɑmsi, ti'kɑmsi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tombigbee</td>
<td>[tɑm'biɡbi]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### B. (Brasch 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catawissa</td>
<td>[kætə'waːsə]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyers Grove</td>
<td>[ɛərərz 'grov]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington Creek</td>
<td>[ˈhæniɛntən, ˈhæniɛntən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nescopeck Mountain</td>
<td>[ˈneskəˌpek]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfahler Hill</td>
<td>[ˈfelər]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohrbach Bridge</td>
<td>[ˈrɔrbæk; ˈrɔrbæk]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susquehanna River</td>
<td>[səskwiˈhænə]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanich Bridge</td>
<td>[ˈwʌnɪk]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### C. (Canadian Oxford 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assiniboine</td>
<td>[əˈsmɪbəin]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>[ˈedɪnəbrə]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pronunciation Keys in Dictionaries of Place-Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>[ˈɡlʌstər]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>[ˈliːtʃənstain]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie</td>
<td>[suː seint məˈriː]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitchurch-Stouffville</td>
<td>[ˌwɪtʃərtʃˈstoʊfvl]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Recording**—'a talking pronouncing dictionary' (suggested in Emsley 1940, 59; 1941).

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