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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

SURFACE WATER SUPPLY
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PART 1
NORTH ATLANTIC SLOPE BASINS

Prepared in cooperation with the States of
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in the preceding 3 months is stored in the form of snow or ice, or in ponds, lakes, and swamps, or as underground water, and this stored water passes off in the streams during the spring break-up. At the end of September, on the other hand, the only stored water available for run-off is possibly a small quantity in the ground; therefore, the run-off for the year beginning October 1 is practically all derived from precipitation within that year.

The base data collected at gaging stations consist of records of stage, measurements of discharge, and general information used to supplement the gage heights and discharge measurements in determining the daily flow. The records of stage are obtained either from direct readings on a nonrecording gage or from a water-stage recorder that gives a continuous record of the fluctuations. Measurements of discharge are made with a current meter by the general methods outlined in standard textbooks on the measurement of river discharge. A typical gaging station, equipped with water-stage recorder and measuring cable and car, is shown in figure 1.

Rating tables giving the discharge for any stage are prepared from the discharge measurements. The application of the daily gage height to these rating tables gives the daily discharge from which the monthly and yearly mean discharge is computed.

The data presented for each gaging station in the area covered by this report usually comprise a description of the station, a table showing the daily discharge of the stream, and a table of monthly and yearly discharge and run-off.

The description of the station gives information in regard to the location and type of gage, diversions that decrease the flow at the gage, artificial regulation from pondage or storage, and the accuracy of the records. Under "Average discharge" is given the average discharge for the number of years indicated. It is given only for stations for which there are 10 or more complete years of record. Information under "Extremes" gives the maximum discharge and gage height; the minimum discharge, if there is little or no regulation; the minimum daily discharge, if there is extensive regulation, and also the minimum discharge, if useful; and also the minimum gage height except when it is of no importance. Unless otherwise qualified, the maximum discharge corresponds to the crest stage obtained by use of a water-stage recorder or a nonrecording gage read at the time of the crest. Likewise the minimum represents the lowest discharge unless otherwise qualified.

The table of daily discharge gives, for stations equipped with nonrecording gages, the discharge in second-feet corresponding to once-daily or the mean of twice-daily readings of the gage. For stations equipped with water-stage recorders the table gives the discharge corresponding to the mean daily gage height except for stations on

streams subject to sudden or rapid fluctuation. For stations subject to such fluctuation the mean daily gage height may not indicate the true mean daily discharge, which must be obtained by averaging the discharge for intervals of the day or by using the discharge integrator, an instrument for obtaining the mean daily discharge from a contin-

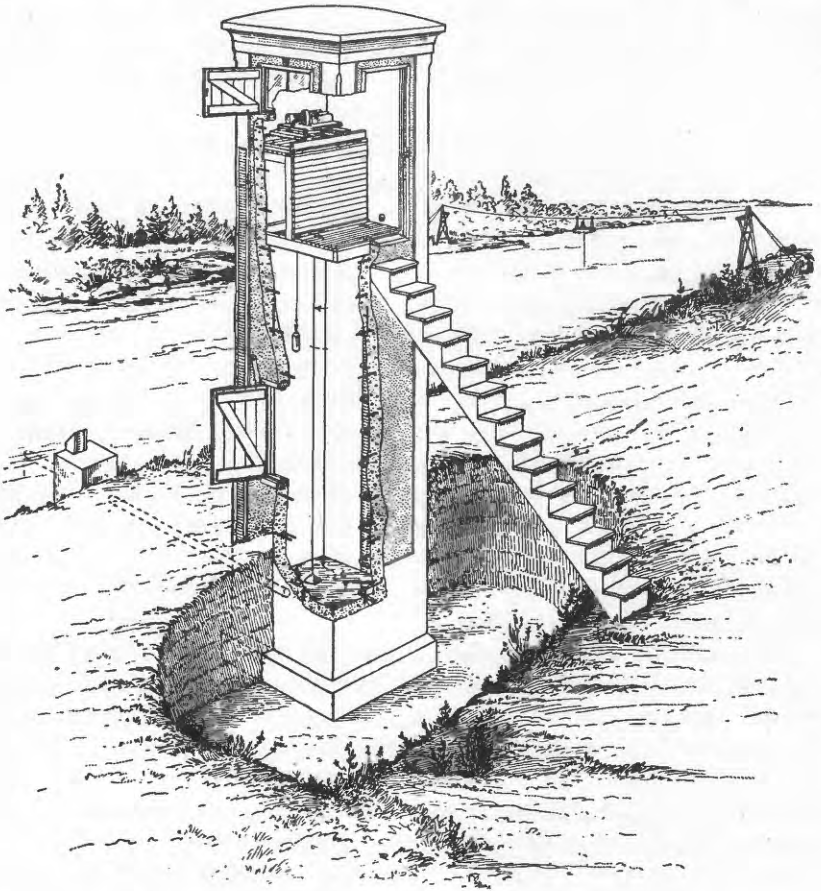


FIGURE 1.—Typical river-measurement station showing concrete well and house for water-stage recorder and staff gages, cable, and car.

uous gage-height graph and containing as an essential element the rating curve of the station.

In the table of monthly discharge the column headed "Maximum" gives the maximum daily discharge and not the discharge when the water surface was at crest height. Likewise, in the column headed "Minimum" the quantity given is the minimum daily discharge. The column headed "Mean" is the average flow in cubic feet per second during the month.

