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Number 12

### Ninevah? What? Where?



### The Old Bridge at Ninevah

Ninevah? If you follow Route 80 east from the North Madison traffic circle toward Killingworth you pass over a concrete bridge just beyond Summer Hill Road. North of the bridge is the large dam constructed by the Regional Water Authority in the 1950s. Beyond the dam lies the Hammonasset Reservoir which supplies drinking water to the city of New Haven and other areas.

Not so many years ago this area was known as Ninevah Falls. It was a favorite spot for lovers, picnickers and day trippers. Few go to Ninevah any more. Well, maybe a few fisherman and occasional hikers. The Hammonasset River still flows among the gray rocks beside lichen covered cliffs. The Land Trust's Bailey Trail meanders among the rocks and under the dark evergreens. The sound of rushing water shuts out the traffic sounds and a sense of peacefulness reigns.

Ninevah today is greatly changed from the days when the wooden bridge pictured above spanned the rushing river just a bit north of the present bridge built in 1933. The low stone dam above the bridge has been replaced with a massive concrete structure, the Bark Mill that stood beside the stream is gone but the tannery pits of the tannery on the Killingworth side still remain.

Gone are the horse drawn buggies that brought the picnickers to spend a pleasant summer afternoon gathered on the rocks at the water's edge. Nearly faded from memory is the story of Nellie Dowd, the 34 year old widow of Judson Dowd, Civil War Veteran. Nellie and her two year old daughter Luella were on their way from Race Hill Road where the family operated a saw mill to Killingworth to visit her parents on a late fall afternoon in November, 1877. As they crossed the bridge Nellie may have stopped to admire the view when the horse was startled, perhaps by a whirlwind of fallen leaves. In its confusion the horse caused the buggy to crash through the south railing. Nellie, her daughter, the horse and buggy all fell to the rocks below. By some strange twist of fate Luella survived in her mother's arms. Nellie's grave lies in the Flat Rock Cemetery on Race Hill Road just south of Route 80

Ninevah is still a beautiful spot. The Regional Water Authority has built a footbridge spanning the river beside the highway bridge providing a spot for the world-weary traveler to rest from his or her cares. A spot to enjoy the rush of water over rocks and the cool green of the forest.

**Directions:** Drive north on Route 79 from the center of Madison. At the North Madison traffic circle take the first right onto Route 80. Follow Route 80 past Summer Hill Road and watch for the concrete bridge over the Hammonasset River. Park at the side of the road just before crossing the bridge.

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