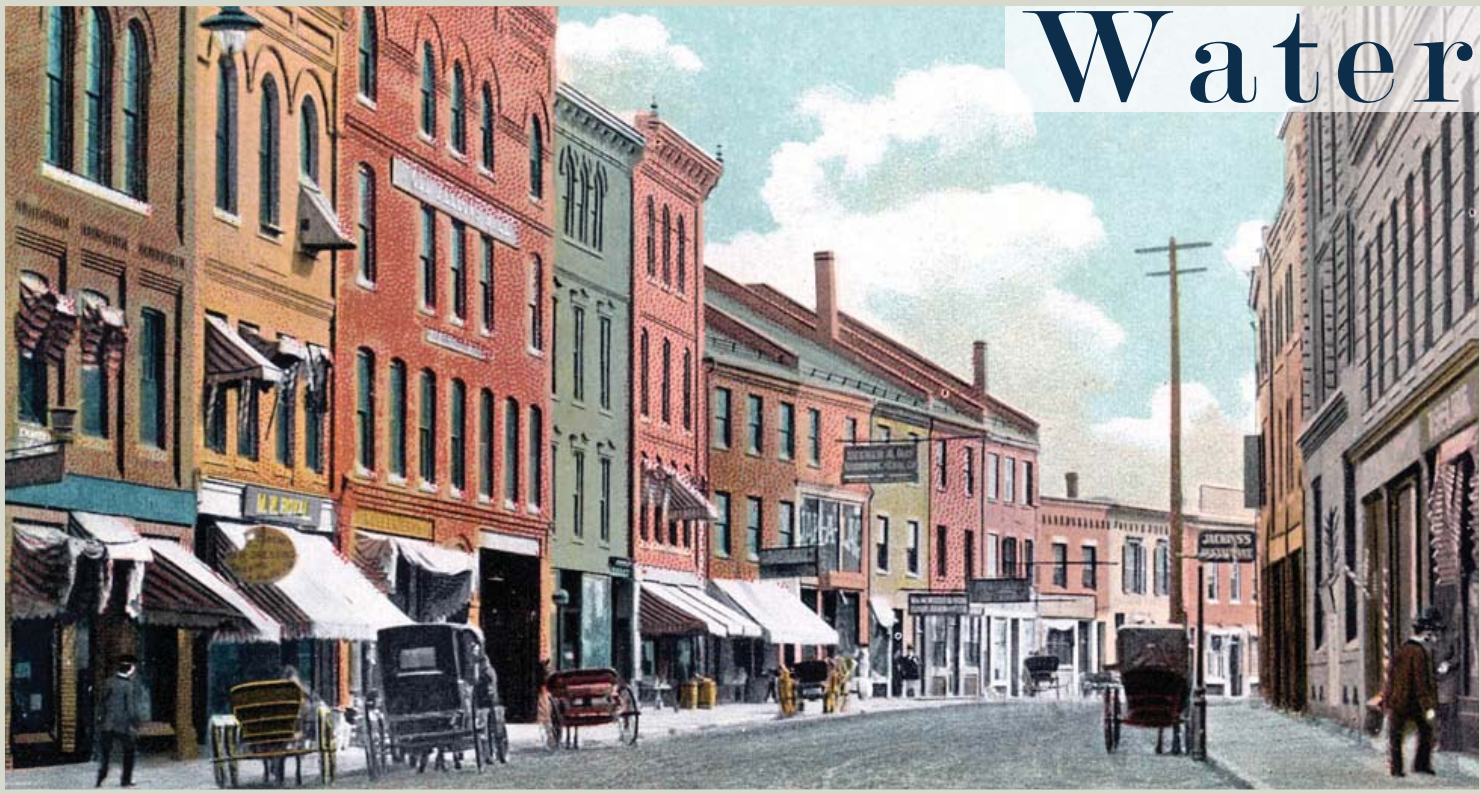
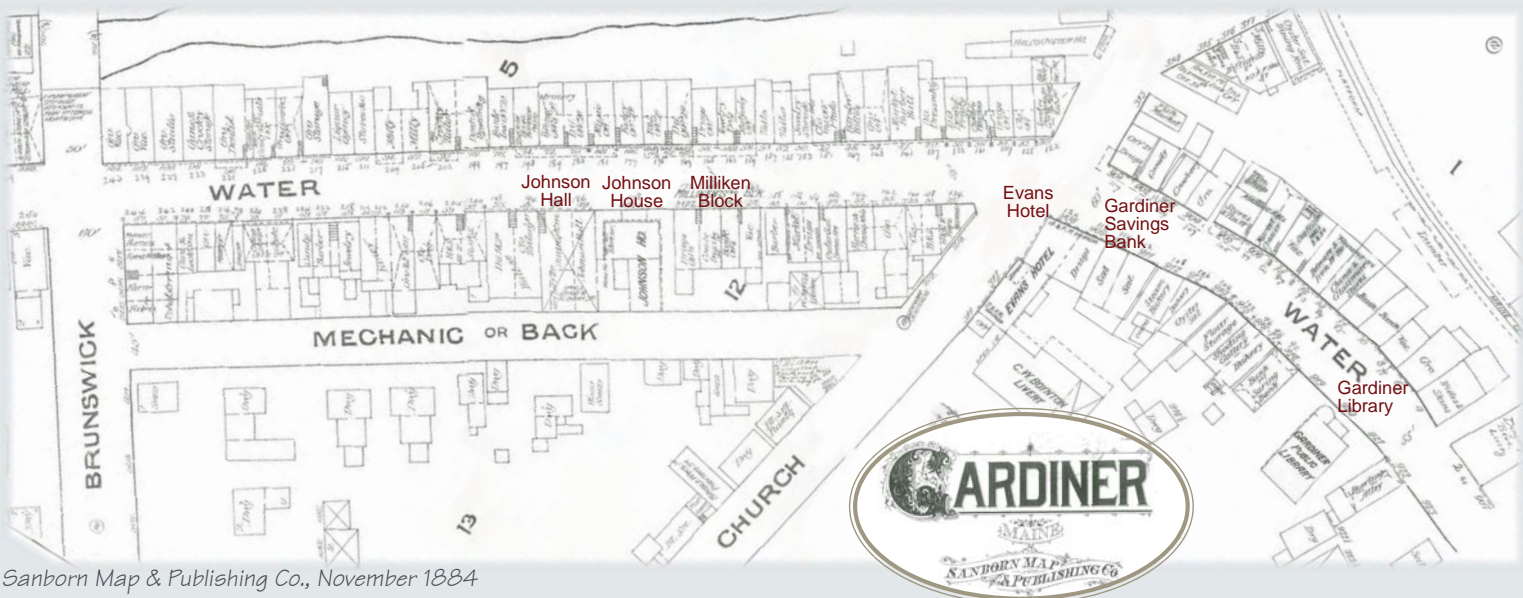


Water

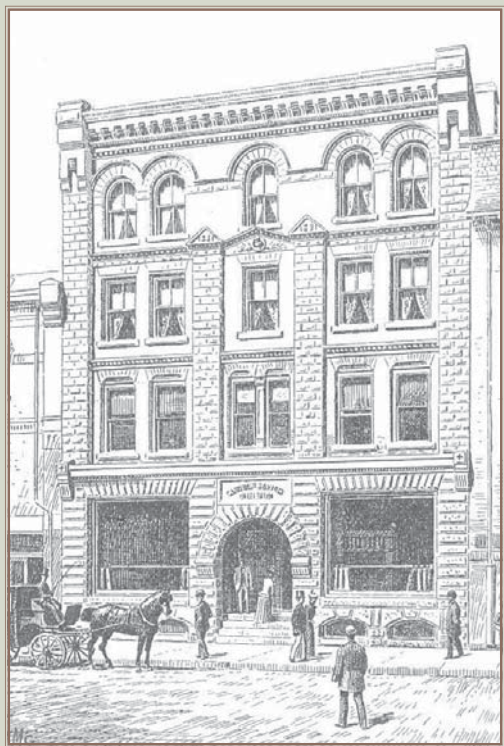


This late 1800s view of the northeast end of Water Street looks much the same today.

Water Street, with its two-, three-, and four-story brick buildings, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Built more than a century ago, these structures define the character of the city's commercial, office, and retail district. The district is also protected by the City's preservation ordinance. Early postcards and photographs show some of the diverse architectural styles of the era. The predominant styles are Romanesque Revival, Italianate, English Jacobean, and Late Federal.



Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., November 1884

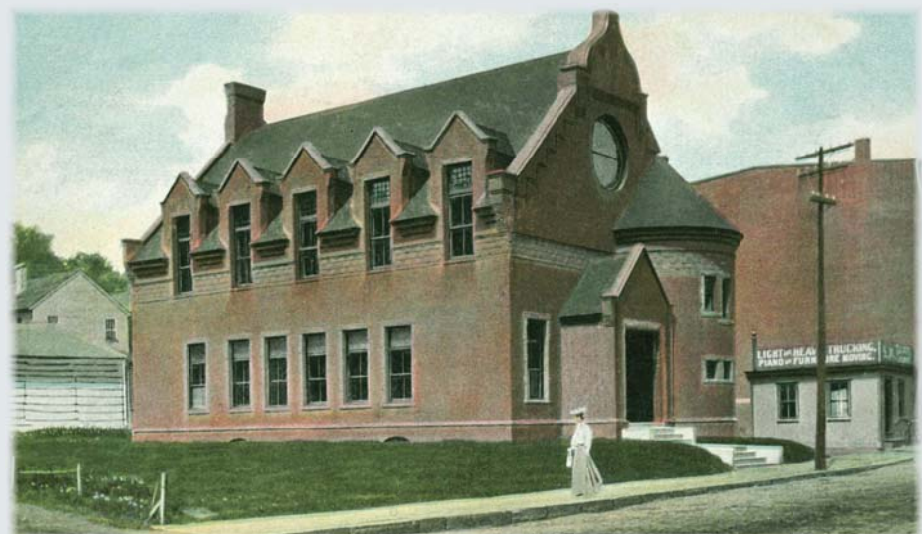


The Gardiner Savings Institution was founded in 1834 as Maine's third savings bank. In 1891, the bank built this four-story headquarters on Water Street, adjacent to the Evans Hotel. Designed by Gardiner architect Edwin E. Lewis, the Gardiner Savings Institution was a handsome brick and stone block in the Romanesque Revival style. It was torn down in 1954 to make way for the present Savings Bank of Maine.



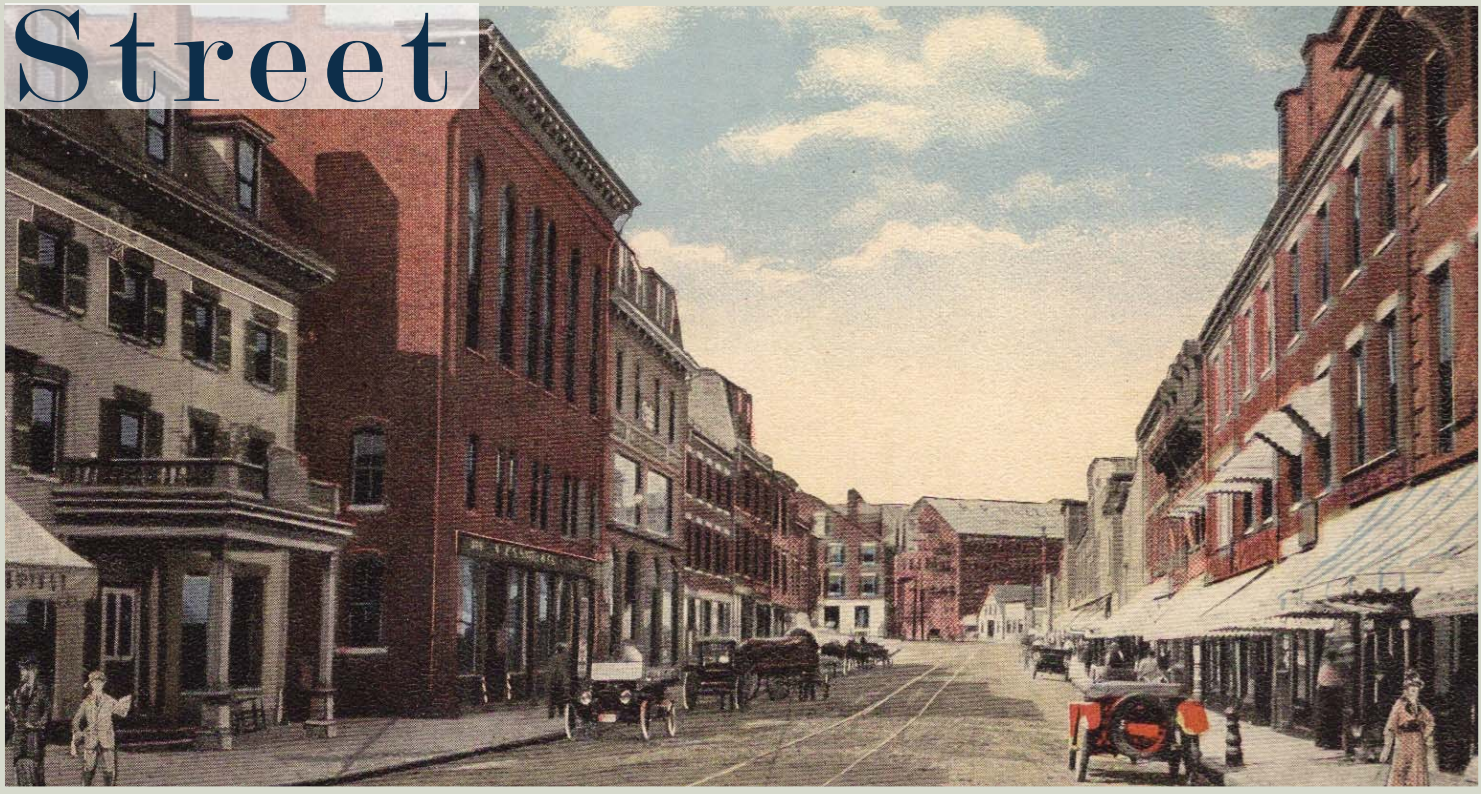
The Gardiner Hotel (left), a Federal-style brick building, was erected in 1837 at the corner of Water and Church Streets.

In 1870 a fourth story and mansard roof were added to the Gardiner Hotel and the name changed to the Evans Hotel (right). The Evans was damaged by fire in 1901 and demolished.



Designed by Henry Richards in 1881, this brick and stone library building, with its distinctive gable, dormers, and stained glass window, is built in the English Jacobean style. A one-story wing was added to the library in 1929.

Street



This early 20th century view, primarily of the south side of Water Street, shows the Johnson House (far left) and Johnson Hall (left center), the oldest operating theater in Maine. Old trolley tracks lie in the center of the street. One of Gardiner's many shoe and boot factories can be seen in the distance.



The 1827 Cobbossee House was bought by Gardiner native Benjamin Johnson in 1856. He renamed the popular hotel and tavern Johnson House (above). In 1864 he replaced the wooden livery stable next door with the brick, Italianate-style, Johnson Hall. The Hall's lower stories were a stable and hay loft, until being replaced by storefronts in 1884. The theater occupied the upper stories. The hotel was demolished in 1972 and a park created.



Built in 1864, Johnson Hall featured many shows, including vaudeville, concerts, and The Black Crook, which was both the first musical and the first touring Broadway show in America. Movies were shown from 1929-1959, and live shows began again in 1991.



The Milliken Block was Water Street's largest Victorian-era commercial block. Three structures were removed in 1876 to provide the site for this three-story Italianate brick building. The Milliken Block featured a cast-iron storefront and window caps. This building still stands today, next to the Water Street mini park (site of the demolished Johnson House).

