



# THE MUSES OF GWINN

ART AND NATURE IN A GARDEN  
DESIGNED BY

WARREN H. MANNING,  
CHARLES A. PLATT, AND  
ELLEN BIDDLE SHIPMAN

By Robin Karson

**G**winn, originally the home of Cleveland industrialist and philanthropist William Gwinn Mather, remains one of the best-preserved estates of the American Country Place Era, c. 1895–1939. The grounds of this magnificent estate on the shores of Lake Erie retain their formal gardens, lawns, fountains, and garden pavilions.

It took nearly two decades as well as the combined talents of three of America's most influential designers to create Mather's estate. These are the muses of Gwinn: architect Charles Platt, who adapted the Palladian villa and garden to American settings; Warren Manning, the country's premier plantsman and founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and Ellen Biddle Shipman, who ran a prestigious and successful landscaping practice and raised the art of planting design to new heights.

The work of these three is documented here in a nearly complete record of correspondence, photographs, and plant lists. Drawing on this previously unpublished resource, Robin Karson reconstructs the complex development of Gwinn over more than 20 years. She defines Gwinn as a landmark work of art in which the design principles of the period are epitomized, illuminating in particular the tension that existed, then as now, between formal and informal styles. The text includes biographical sketches of the four principals involved in the creation of Gwinn and is illustrated with archival photographs as well as lush new images taken by Carol Betsch.

Robin Karson is the Executive Director of the Library of American Landscape History, Inc. Her previous Abrams book, *Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect*, received an Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

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