

George Thompson Fairchild was born on October 6, 1838 in Lorain County, Ohio. He attended Oberlin College, receiving an AB degree in 1862 followed by a MA degree in theology in 1865. Next, Fairchild went on to work first as an instructor and then as a professor of English at Michigan Agricultural College (MAC) beginning in 1866. Along with serving as a professor, he also held roles as vice president and for one year as interim president. While at MAC, Fairchild built up the college library and organized a student government. In 1879 he left the university to work as the president of the Agricultural College of Kansas where he served until 1897. While at Kansas, Fairchild strongly advocated for the inclusion of a classical liberal arts education at land-grant colleges. He is credited with saying "Our college exists not so much to make men farmers as to make farmers men." Fairchild passed away on March 16, 1901. Fairchild Theater in the MSU College of Music is named in his honor.