Thomas John Carlisle was born October 11, 1913 in Plattsburgh, N.Y. and was ordained as a United Presbyterian minister in 1937. He was the author of a number of books of religious poetry, as well as a tutor and teacher at various colleges. He wrote the lyrics to "Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One" and "Two Famous Men", and contributed more than 1,500 articles and poems to newspapers, religious and literary publications and magazines. Spoke at Gunnison Chapel at St. Lawrence University on April 26, 1987 as well as on a previous occasion.

The collection consists of approximately 8 books published between 1968 and 1987 including some books of poetry, 800 loose poems, letters, newspaper and magazine articles and 2 pieces of sheet music. The poems are typewritten and many contain references to biblical verses. The correspondence consists of letters to and from publishers about his books.