The papers of Ethel Polk were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs by Professor James Lorence in August of 1991 and opened for research in November of 2004.

Ethel Polk was born in New York City and moved to Detroit, Michigan in 1935. She worked as a secretary in the office of the UAW WPA-Welfare Department from 1938 until 1941. Throughout this period she was a contact person between unemployed workers and the Detroit Welfare Department. After leaving the UAW in 1942, she worked for the Michigan AFL-CIO office in Lansing.

The Ethel Polk Collection consists of issue of the UAW WPA-Welfare Department Bulletin for 1938-39, minutes of a WPA stewards meeting and a copy of the WPA-Welfare Department program.