The University of Georgia Libraries is the recipient of a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation to save historically significant American films that are unlikely to survive without public support.

“A growing area of scholarship in the film studies field in the last few years is research into itinerant filmmakers and ‘hometown movies’ they made. Itinerants went from town to town all over the United States from the 1920s through the 1950s, making films involving town residents,” said Margie Compton, a film archivist with the Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection at the UGA Libraries.

The $14,780 NFPF grant will be used to preserve a 1947 Fitzgerald hometown movie, a 1936 Cordele hometown movie’s outtakes, and a home movie of itinerant filmmaker Don O. Newland making the “Americus’ Hero” melodrama in November 1928.

Compton was surprised, after researching Newland, to discover in a home movie donated this year that Americus resident Frank Sheffield Jr. had used his home movie camera to film the action while Newland shot “Americus’ Hero.”

“This is an exciting and unique convergence of itinerant and amateur filmmakers and is fabulous documentation to have and preserve,” Compton said.

The Americus home movie was donated by Sheffield’s grandson, F. Sheffield Hale, who learned of the libraries’ interest in preserving home movies. Frank Sheffield Jr. shot his home movies between 1925 and 1965 in his hometown and on travels in the United States and abroad.

“This is a truly lively collection of one man’s life and enthusiasms on 16 mm film,” Compton said.

Films saved through the NPF programs are made available for on-site research and are seen widely through screenings, exhibits, DVDs, television broadcasts and the Internet. The grants fund the creation of a preservation master and two public-viewing copies of each film.