

**Letter of Augustin Smith Clayton (1783-1839) to his brother, George Rootes Clayton (1779-1840, who lived in Milledgeville), responding to news of the death of George's wife, Eliza<sup>1</sup>.**

Athens, September 10<sup>th</sup> 1829

My Dear Brother

Your letter containing the truly distressing intelligence of our dear Sister's death reached in a few minutes after we had learned the dreadful event by a letter from Mrs [Thweate?] to Mrs Thomas.<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to describe the shock to our feelings which this fresh calamity, in our family, occasioned. We seem to be singled out for the display of severe & signal chastisement, & it may be for some wise purpose, but to me it is wonderfully mysterious. Your afflictive loss has nearly reconciled me to mine<sup>3</sup> for if mine seemed to be almost insupportable, what must yours be, where an amiable, fond & affectionate wife & mother has been so suddenly torn from her family. I do not write to offer you consolation for I have but too recently passed through the terrible conviction that on such occasions all offered comfort is fallacious. Our grief must be worn out by the same cause that wears away our life & with me it seems they can only end together. I can & do offer you our most heartfelt sorrow & if sympathy of the most sincere & tender kind could give you any relief, I am [unclear] your suffering would come to a speedy end. Remember us affectionately to the children & believe me to be your sympathizing brother.

[signed] A. S. Clayton

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<sup>1</sup> For death notice of Eliza Clayton, wife of George R. Clayton of Milledgeville, see *Augusta Chronicle*, September 23, 1829, page 3.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Peninah Thomas, second wife of Stevens Thomas Sr., all of Athens.

<sup>3</sup> The death of his 19 year old son, Augustin Clayton, Jr., on August 16, 1829. A. S. Clayton, Jr., had just received his A. M. degree from the University of Georgia (Franklin College) on August 5, and then was admitted to the bar, and commenced practice as a lawyer on September 13, 1829, but immediately took ill and died three days later.