

1868 - 1893

The Iron Lighthouse in the 19th Century

What Makes Our Lighthouse Unique?

Every lighthouse has a unique combination of the way the light flashes at night (characteristic) and the way it is painted to be observed during the day (daymark). By recognizing these differences, ships could tell exactly where they were and could avoid the shoals shown on their charts.

The daymark for this Lighthouse has changed over time. When it was first built in 1868, it was painted all white, including the lantern room. 1873 is the first year it was painted with the 3 black and 3 white horizontal bands you see today, but the lamp room was kept white. The last change came in 1894 when the lamp room was painted black.

There are three major types of light characteristics used in lighthouse towers – fixed, flashing, and a combination of fixed and flashing. Flashing lights are the most effective and most powerful. The characteristic for the original Cape Canaveral Fresnel lens was to flash for 5 seconds and be dark for the remaining 55 seconds of every minute.

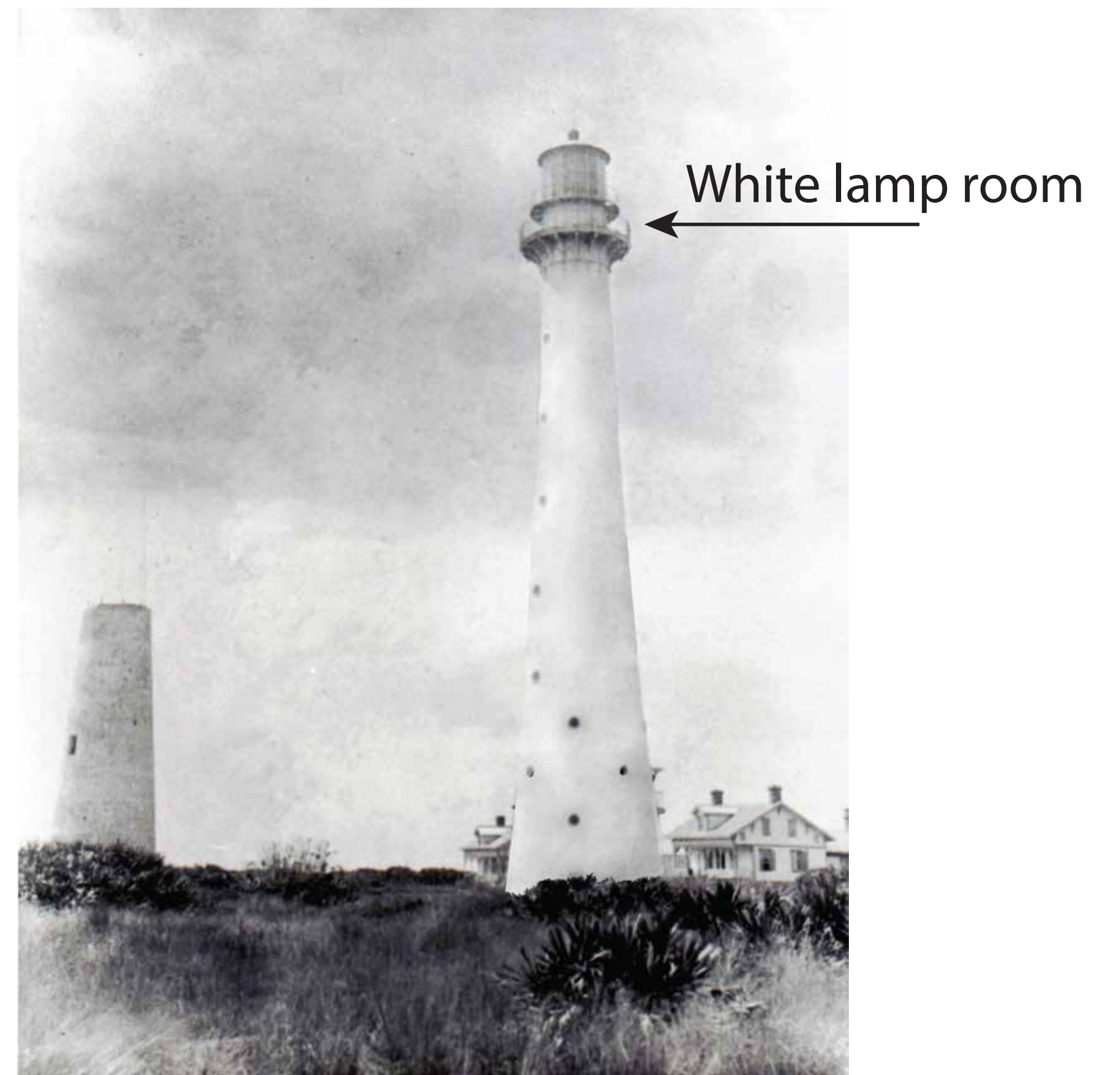
Note - The current characteristic is 2 flashes in 5 seconds, then 15 seconds dark.

Building a Family Business

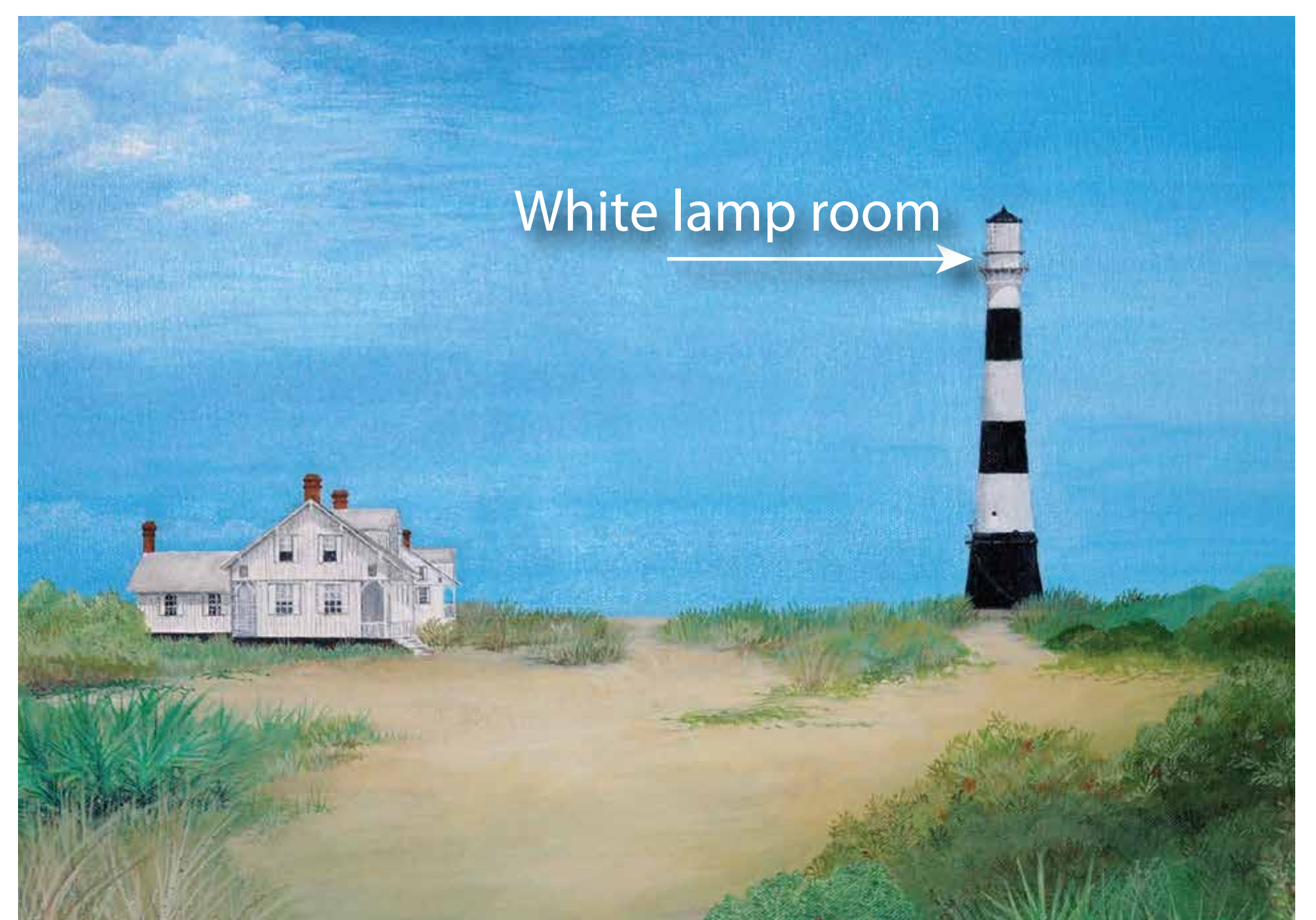
Mills Burnham became the Head Keeper again following the Civil War, and was present during construction of the iron lighthouse.

Several assistant keepers came and went over the years, but Burnham remained until catching the measles and dying in 1886.

By then, other assistants had married into the Burnham family and the next generation was also destined to continue the “family business”.



1868 - 1873, original site, white tower with white lamp room



1873 - 1894, original site, black & white bands with white lamp room



1894 to present, current site, black & white bands with black lamp room