That's a lighthouse - not a missile!

Hampton Dunn
THAT’S A LIGHTHOUSE --- NOT A MISSILE!

CAPE KENNEDY --- There are so many missiles and other tall structures here at this busy space center, the historic old lighthouse which dominated the area for more than a century gets upstaged. From a distance the 165-foot black-and-white tower resembles a missile and more than one hapless newcomer to the Cape, invited to watch a missile launch, has kept his eyes glued to the lighthouse while the real missile lifted off from an entirely different area!

The Cape Canaveral lighthouse has a colorful past, dating back to its original construction of wood in 1866. It later was replaced with riveted steel plates lined with brick. Beach erosion caused its removal in 1892.

As the Space Center took away the glory from the old lighthouse, the log at the tower lamented the change, thusly: "The lite has seen its worst days. It’s lost its family and friends to give way to progress. The homes and storage buildings were given to a new bunch of service that had come into being (U.S. Air Force). So now, where children used to make all the noises that the old lite would hear, there are big missiles that shake her brick loose. Although she was once a proud lady that looked down on everyone, she now looks up to every steel derrick on the east side of the Cape." This was written in the 1950s.

Cape Canaveral was named by Ponce de Leon’s crew in 1513 for the cane fields, or canaverales, that grew here. It also was known as Cabo de las Corientes (cape of the currents). President Lyndon Johnson changed the name of the missile center site to honor President J. F. Kennedy.