The Mystery of

A mouldering old Spanish arsenal stands on capitol grounds in Baton Rouge: no records of its origin have been found.

Surrounding the arsenal and the path encircling it is 10-foot-high brick wall.

Rows of columns form the bases of perfect arches within the ancient building.
There's a curious inscription in black paint on one of the walls. "Kalamazoo," it reads, "the home of the Michigan Sixth Regiment, all but nine and a half companies (sic)."

Below, in the same lettering, these words are inscribed: "In memory of J. C. Breckenridge." (John C. Breckenridge was a Confederate general who led 3000 men into battle in August, 1862, in a futile effort to recapture Baton Rouge from the Union forces.)

In the 1930s, Louisiana Guardmen were stationed in the arsenal, and showers and other facilities installed for their use are still to be seen. In recent years, the building has been used as the storage place for a large accumulation of junk.

Now, however, the building is destined for an honorable future. The travel bureau has received an appropriation of $40,000 to be used in converting it into a museum, and all of the junk is being cleared out in preparation for the conversion.

The museum project is what inspired Welsh's search for the truth about the structure's origin. In his attempt to solve the arsenal's mystery, he has contacted Louisiana State University experts, Spanish officials, the Smithsonian Institution and the US bureau of archives.

He has received innumerable phone calls offering clues and speculations—all minus "But I like to get these calls," says Welsh. "Some day, somebody's going to call in with the real solution."

James DeMars, workman, surveys arsenal, situated near modern capitol (background)