

# CASESTUDY

Type: Commercial | Issue: MS201501

## Battered Tiebacks and Custom-Built Whaler Stabilize Historic Observatory

**RAM JACK LOCATION:** 

### Ram Jack Mississippi www.ramjackms.com | 601-707-3012 Ridgeland, MS

# MILLSAPS COLLEGE HISTORIC JAMES OBSERVATORY Jackson, Mississippi

#### CASE STUDY 2015



The James Observatory, an historic landmark at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, is an iconic, brick building and prominent feature of the campus. Built in 1892 and topped with a wooden catwalk as well as a metal rotating dome, the building was once used by astronomers to calculate the exact time by observing the stars. Renovated in 1980 to provide Millsaps College students with further opportunities to learn, the building is open for gazing at stars, tracking comets, observing planets, or just enjoying the sky.

#### SITUATION

The 120+ year old building's rear wing had severe problems. The end of the structure was sinking, as evidenced by growing cracks in the mortar of the bricks on both sides of the structure. The James Observatory had settled as much as 4 in. along the rear wall, likely due to a prior grading adjustment that allowed the soil adjacent to the problem site to collapse and settle. Ram Jack Mississippi was called by a contractor who encountered the damage while doing other repairs.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Ram Jack Mississippi proposed using two battered tiebacks with an epoxy coated whaler to pull the wall back to its original location. Realizing the extent of the damage and the underlying issues of the historic building, Ram Jack Mississippi was unsure as to whether or not the structure could be recovered to its original condition.



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#### OUTCOME

Two 2 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" battered helical piles tied into a custom whaler were installed. They reached an average depth of 18 ft., and adequately stabilized the structure. The job took two days in total.

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