Resetting a gravestone
Joel Hoit stone is leaning forward and tilted to the left. Determine if stone is stable enough to move for resetting. Photograph the stone. Document the inscription and condition of the stone. Prepare tools and area.
Tools for resetting a stone
Rake, shovel, tamper, gloves, level, loppers, wood blocks and stakes for braces
Start to carefully remove soil around the bottom of the stone. Wear gloves and watch for broken glass in front of the stone. Use a plastic trowel for working close to the stone to avoid scratching it. Place top soil which you remove on a tarp for use later.
After you have removed the soil from around the stone, carefully lift it out of the hole and rest on wood blocks away from the hole, so it can be cleaned thoroughly without creating mud around the work site.
Wash stone with water and a soft bristle brush
Use an approved biocide to remove the biological growth
Rinse, rinse, rinse with clean water
Clean front and back
Remove all large rocks from the site
Large rocks can place pressure on the gravestone and move it during the freeze/thaw cycle
Prepare the hole which should be slightly wider than the stone and deep enough for one/third of the stone to be below grade
Remove large stones and roots from the hole
Mix pea gravel with sand
Use masonry sand, not play sand which has been washed and can cause staining

Place a small amount of sand/gravel mix in bottom of the hole
This will help to drain water away from the stone
When the site is prepared, move the stone into place
Making sure the stone is facing the proper direction
Set stone and check with a level, front to back and side to side
Begin to fill in around stone with sand/gravel mix
Keep checking the level of the stone as you continue to fill around stone
Tamp down sand/gravel mix and begin to mix in soil as you fill around stone
Use water to help compact the sand mix and soil
Continue to tamp down and fill around stone
Check stone is level as you back fill the site
Replace top soil around stone
Photograph the completed work and document the process and treatments used