

**How to Restore an Historic Property in Slovakia:
A User-Friendly English Overview**

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Introduction

To date, there has not been an English-language restoration guide for foreign owners of historic monuments in Slovakia. Some materials exist in Slovak, but none provide the additional orientation needed for foreigners in English. As restoring historic properties in Slovakia is an increasingly attractive investment opportunity, this guide seeks to help Americans who hope to restore historic properties in Slovakia.

This guide was written by an American and with the input of Americans, so those from the United States are the primary intended audience. However, it is hoped that any English-speakers will benefit from this guide, to one extent or another.

Use

This and the following text-only pages compose the report, written for AI Nova to describe the problem, methodology, and results. This portion is meant to be kept private. The section described in the table of contents as “Part 2: The Public Guide” is what would be published and made available to the public.

This document is meant to chronologically address the aspects of restoration, so it is meant to be read from beginning to end. However, users with specific questions should be able to skip to the relevant section. As this is only a basic overview, it is not meant to stand on its own. It will provide links and contact information for users to carry out the restoration process. This document assumes that the restorer already owns the property, and is aware of its historic status. Therefore, it does not address how to purchase a historic property or obtain the owner's permission for restoring a property that is not one's own.

The tips in each section are from Americans who have restored or are restoring historic properties within Slovakia in the past five years (as of 2010).

Methodology

The methodology of this project consisted primarily of speaking to Americans who had purchased and are restoring, or have restored, historic properties in Slovakia. The idea to create this guide came from a conversation with some American friends of mine who are doing just that. They mentioned that it would have been useful to have a guide in this process.

I then spoke to Dr. Ing. Arch. Andrea Urandova, PhD and Ing. Arch. Jaroslav Kilian, who gave me suggestions about the next steps to take and names of people in Slovakia whom I could contact. Among these was Mrs. Katarina Voskova of Banska Štiavnica, who put me in touch with Mr. William

Byers and Mrs. Elizabeth Yenchko. Both had purchased and restored eighteenth-century burgher's houses in Banská Štiavnica. The third party that I consulted was my friends, the Thiessens, who own an eighteenth-century kaštieľ in Čičejovce, eastern Slovakia. To have more respondents would have been helpful, but I could not discover any others. The author recommends consultation with more foreign owners of historic houses for future study (see the "Recommendations" section) All three parties had done the majority of the restoration from 2005 to 2010.

The next step was to create a questionnaire to give me some idea of what the restoration process was like for them. The questionnaire, reproduced in full in the appendices along with respondents' answers, focused on three basic areas. First, I established the basic identification information about the owner and property. Next, I addressed the initial condition of the house upon purchase. Finally, I inquired into the actual restoration process, including the local experts consulted, what was actually done to restore the property, and what further advice they would offer to another person in their situation.

The second major source for my information was the Slovak Monuments Board's (Pamiatkový Úrad) "Vademecum Vlastunika," or owner's guide to restoring a historic property. After discovering that this was available through the Monument's Board's website, I did a basic translation through an on-line translator. I hoped to integrate this information into each step of what I found out from the surveys, but this document only covered one step of the process: getting official approval from the Monuments Board. As one of their own publications, the "Vademecum Vlastunika" was disputably the authoritative source on this aspect of the process. In the end, this fit quite well with the information from the American questionnaire respondents, as it covered an aspect of the process that I had not inquired into in detail with them.

I have included supplementary material, such as a listing of the individual counties' Monuments Boards, that we thought might be useful.

Results

After receiving back the results of the questionnaires, I asked a few follow-up questions to clarify certain points, and then I organized the responses into four main categories which had emerged (getting to know your property, getting approved, special cases, and extra help). Although the latter two categories were later abandoned as being behind the scope of this guide, the rest of the structure remained.

Finally, I went through the respondents' comments and fit them into the two categories listed above, with a few additional subcategories. None of the respondents disagreed with each other, but each brought another helpful angle to the process. The input from these Americans appears directly quoted as "tips" in each section. I used the format with individual quotes to make the guide seem more personal and avoid cumbersome segues between different facts. The purpose of the guide is to be a quick and easy read. The basic information in each section is drawn from the basics of the process, as experienced by the respondents. I presented these responses, along with the most relevant translated section of the "Vademecum Vlastunika," in my first draft of this guide.

I believe that these respondents, having experienced this entire process themselves, are reliable.

No human's memory is faultless, but the information given can be verified through the Monuments Board, if necessary. All three of the respondents answered the first questionnaire in full, but none of them answered every question in the second one. This was not a problem, however, as the second questionnaire was only intended to provide a means for evaluating the usefulness of the guide. All but one of the respondents had helpful suggestions for the guide's improvement.

The second draft is supplemented by additional information gained from a follow-up questionnaire (also reproduced in the appendices), emailed out with the then-current version of the guide.

Recommendations

Until now, there was not a step-by-step guide for Americans wishing to restore a historic building in Slovakia. The *Vademecum Vlastunika*, the Slovak owner's guide for restoring historic properties, only addressed the legal actions needed to attempt a restoration. (A condensed, translated form of this document appears as the table in Step 5 of the public guide.) The process outside of this legal side was not addressed in the *Vademecum Vlastunika*, and to the author's knowledge does not exist even in Slovak. The information gathered from the Americans who had been through the process, organized into steps, composes the majority of the material that is unique to this guide. The English translation of the *Vademecum Vlastunika*, and the links to the laws are not available (to the author's knowledge) anywhere else. Combined with the local monuments board directory, these things have never been published before in English.

Comparison With the American Process

I had also hoped to do a comparison with the American process of having changes to historic buildings approved. I created a questionnaire and sent it to Elizabeth Yenchko, who was a Historic Preservation contractor for almost twenty years before moving to Slovakia. However, after a month and a half of waiting and gentle reminders, she still has not responded as of the writing of this paper. Having never undergone the actual restoration process myself, and not finding the needed information on the website, I could not address this issue as I wished to.

I did, however, find that there is no equivalent of Preservation Briefs, technical manuals on the restoration of specific aspects of buildings (such as cleaning historic masonry, roofing, and preservation of historic storefronts) available from the Slovak Monuments Board.

Additionally, the United States provides extensive material (both online and in print) about how to research and create a listing for a historic property. This differs from the Slovak process in that anyone can do the research on a historic property to have it listed. The document is then submitted to the local, state, and finally national Historic Preservation Board for approval. Local representatives work with the writer of the document if help is needed and ensure that it adheres to the standard of the state. Therefore, no additional research is needed by a special expert to undertake restoration, as in Slovakia. Because the preparation and submission of a National Register of Historic Places Nomination is such an extensive and intensive process, requiring above-average research skills and strong writing skills, most homeowners do not have time to embark on this, and those with experience in technical historic writing are often hired for this task.

In general, I believe part of the reason that I could not find any American guide that explains how to secure approval for restoring a historic building is that the American government's control over

historic monuments is much less strong than that in Slovakia. In the United States, a historically listed site is still the property of the private owner, and, as such, the government can do more than suggest how the owner may restore it.

For example, if an owner decides to undertake a renovation (such as adding a second story) that would destroy the property's historical integrity—or even demolish the structure entirely—the only course of action available to the government is to revoke the property's historic status. This policy, of course, causes a good deal of anguish for the Department of Historic Resources but most owners of a historic property are respectful of its value to future generations. Those owners who are not particularly excited by history are often motivated to maintain the integrity of the property by State and Federal tax incentives.

In short, the American process addresses the issues covered in this guide in a different order from the Slovak one, so that property owners have already completed some of the steps necessary in Slovakia, and other steps are not needed at all. In the future, though, I recommend a comparison between the American government's evaluation of whether a restoration is historically accurate or not and the Slovak one.

Other Recommendations

Further study would include feedback from potential users of this guide, as well as a more thorough evaluation of its usefulness from the three parties interviewed (William Byers, Elizabeth Yenchko, and the Thiessens). Attempts were made to establish a list of approved translators and restorers for each region, but Mrs. Katarina Voskova in Banska Štiavnica advised me that such things are fluid and owners would do better to obtain such information from the local monuments board themselves.

Attempts were also made to discover if other nations have a guide like this directed towards Americans. Of the countries consulted, none had ever created a document like this. However, several mentioned that they had had Americans restore properties and the best course of action might be to consult those individuals themselves to find their opinions.

In the future, laws, as well as other aspects of the restoration process will probably change. It is therefore recommended that steps be taken to ensure that the guide be updated every two years, for example. Future students of AI Nova, if interested, could also undertake the updating of this guide.

Whatever the material in this guide, it will be useless unless disseminated to those who could benefit from it. Several possibilities exist. The United States Embassy (and other national embassies) could have this guide available to anyone moving to Slovakia, in the event that they are considering buying property in Slovakia. (The United States Government recommends that everyone moving abroad register with the embassy). A second option for the dissemination of this material is the Slovak site www.obnova.sk. Anyone can join this site and contribute information about Slovak cultural heritage, collectibles, and antiques. The Monuments Board itself is excluded from this list because we hoped to avoid the complications that may arise from having their laws and procedures translated and (to some extent) evaluated. We hoped to keep this document as close as possible to the actual experiences of the respondents and free from outside expectations.

The idea of including a business plan in this guide, to cover the basics of costs and time frame involved. However, this was not included because it was deemed to be beyond the scope of this document. This would be a useful addition to the guide and it is recommended for any future editions.

Sources Consulted:

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Theissen, Brad and Karla. Personal correspondence with author. 10 January 2010-15 June 2010.

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Thanks to Dr. Andrea Urandova and Dr. Jaroslav Kilian for their consultation!

Appendix: questionnaires with answers

Questionnaire

Basic Identification Information

Owner's Name and country of origin:

Property name:

Location:

Property Type (house, industrial building, ect.):

Year of construction:

Part of historic zone: yes/no

Initial Assessment

- 1) Why did you choose a property in Slovakia?
- 2) For what purpose do you wish to restore/did you restore this building?
- 3) Please briefly describe the condition of the property when you first bought it:

Restoration Process

- 4) Was the property already listed as a historical monument? Yes/No

If no, what steps (if any) did you take to have it listed as such?

- 5) Did you consult any authorities/experts before beginning the restoration process? Which ones would you recommend to future property owners wishing to restore a historic structure?
- 6) What steps did these authorities/experts recommend you take to restore this property?
- 7) What written materials would you recommend to future historic property restorers?
- 8) What steps did you actually take in the restoration process (just a brief outline; please list as close as possible to the order in which they were begun)?
- 9) What do you still hope to accomplish (if anything) in further restoring this property (please list in the order you wish to begin them)?
- 10) Is there anything you discovered during this process that you wish you had known from the beginning?
- 11) What other advice would you offer to foreign individuals hoping to undertake a similar restoration project?

Responses

Brad and Karla Thiessen

Basic Identification Information

Owner's Name and country of origin: *Brad and Karla Thiessen – Canada/USA*

Property name: *Kastiel in Čečejevce*

Location: *Čečejevce, Slovakia 25 km SW of Košice*

Property Type (house, industrial building, ect.): *Manor House- Summer palace =Kaštiel*

Year of construction: *1740*

Part of historic zone: *No, but registered as a Historical Monument of Slovakia*

Initial Assessment

1- Why did you choose a property in Slovakia?

We live here already.

2-For what purpose do you wish to restore/did you restore this building?

Multi use building-small Museum eventually

3- Please briefly describe the condition of the property when you first bought it:

run down, but remarkably good shape compared to other kaštiels in the area. Not at all restored, but the roof was not leaking for the most part. Eaves troughs were broken off with holes in them so it was causing the outside facade to deteriorate. It had been used as a middle agricultural school under the previous regime.

Restoration Process

4-Was the property already listed as a historical monument? Yes If no, what steps (if any) did you take to have it listed as such?

5-What steps did you actually take in the restoration process (just a brief outline; please list as close as possible to the order in which they were begun)?

First thing...fixed the eaves troughs.

Met with the historical society representative that is for the region that includes Čečejevce village.

She gave us a bit of an overview of what we would need to do.

She said the first steps included having the building measured and drawn by surveyors that do this for historic buildings. The pamiatkovy urad=historical society gave us the names of a few different firms that do this.

We wrote a grant for this. We were awarded some money toward the measuring-drawing.

In the front garden we tore up cracked asphalt and put in an additional oval lawn on the driveway.

Next step was to find one of the people from an approved list of experts that would be willing to come for a time to the kastiel and do a vyskum. That is a historical or archeological study on the building to see what can be discovered about the history of the building and the different stages-phases-eras in which it may have been built. The woman that did ours was very knowledgable and helpful. Today that would include digital photos but ours was still just 50 pages printed copy with glossy photos.

After we had the study we gave a copy to the pamiatkovy urad=historical society to read.

A couple months later we had a meeting to discuss the findings.

Our historian was then willing to give us advice and also pointed out things that would be

important to them that they would not want us to change-knock out, etc. For instance...she did say that the roof was not redone correctly in the 1970s. They would not ask us to change it, but would not allow a reconstruction of the roof without correcting the problem.

We went to a gastro industrial firm to talk about a possible kitchen reconstruction for a restaurant and this is where we hit the first huge snag. The EU norms don't allow customer/delivery/kitchen traffic to cross. The pamiatkovy urad=historical society is not wanting to allow a new entrance/doorway/exit to be put into the historical structure. We to this day have not come to a good solution.

We obtained permission to knock out the metal construction in the basement left from the school. Also the modern walls and the old heating system.

We obtained permission to repair the roof and had it repaired and repainted. We got some grant money for this.

We obtained permission to repair the interior plaster and doorways. We are about done with the interior plaster, but the doorways will be a major expense and we have not done that yet. We obtained permission to dig around the building foundation, insulate the foundation and put in a french drainage system. We did get some grant monies towards this but it was very expensive.

We did repair and repaint the outside perimeter wall, even though it does not have the status of a protected monument .

We purchased adjacent properties that were part of the original Kastiel property owner's land. We tore down the fence in the back that was of rusty metal , planted a hedge and are planting a large lawn there now.

We obtained permission to repair the outside facade and gate, but have not completed this work yet.

6- Did you consult any authorities/experts before beginning the restoration process? *We talked to people from different firms as we bid the work. Some restorers have a bit of a different take on the process then the actual scientists at the historical society. We didnt have any way to get any names other than asking at the Pamiatkovy Urad. But once we met with a few of them, they knew of others in the trade.*

Which ones would you recommend to future property owners wishing to restore a historic structure? Dr. Urbanova that did our vyskum was very good.

7-What steps did these authorities/experts recommend you take to restore this property? *Listed above*

8-What written materials would you recommend to future historic property restorers? *Internet, visit other similar buildings.*

9-What do you still hope to accomplish (if anything) in further restoring this property (please list in the order you wish to begin them)? *Facade, historical gardens, gate, heating system, dig concrete floors from basement, new roof*

10-Is there anything you discovered during this process that you wish you had known from the beginning? *Lots of things...everything we've learned. Better to hire individual experts than larger companies.*

11-What other advice would you offer to foreign individuals hoping to undertake a similar restoration project? *Have Patience it will take longer and cost more than you estimate. If you are a person willing to do a lot of things yourself you will save a lot of money.*

You have to submit a list of what you want to do to the pamiatkary before you do anything. We have done that a few different times in the process. They are the ones that sort of tell us what order the things need to be done in. We Did need to have permission for one of the grants. We

had three grants. Each was different rules. The grant rules usually expect you to have permission to do whatever you are applying for, I believe.

Additional Questions for Theissens:

1-Also, did you need to get the vyskum to get the grant?

One of the grants we got was to do the vyskum.

2- Does it matter what order these things are done in? Yes.

3- do you have any contact information for the preservation office that you visited in Ceceovjce?

There is no preservation office in Cecejovce. The woman in charge of that area works out of the office on Main street in Kosice. Every village or town belongs to a certain office and there will be one particular person that is in that office in charge of the area the building is in.

Or for any of the other people that you consulted during the research/grant/application process?

I have names, but that only helps is the other people that buy a historical building will have their's in the same region or area. They will need to contact the pamiatkari (conservation office) in charge of their building's region. Probably in the regions' seat. (Zilina, Banska Bystrica, etc.)

William Byers

Owner's Name and country of origin: William(Bill) Byers, USA

Property name: 6 Remeselnicka

Location: Banska Stiavnica

Property Type (house, industrial building, ect.): miner's house

Year of construction: [restoration] 2009

Part of historic zone: yes/no no...but, contiguous

Initial Assessment

1-Why did you choose a property in Slovakia?

It was a speculation that interested and appealed to me on many levels.

2-For what purpose do you wish to restore/did you restore this building?

I wish to inhabit as a second home; share with friends and pass on to my children. Also, it seemed like a good thing to do: to preserve the historical integrity of a property.

3-Please briefly describe the condition of the property when you first bought it:

It was inhabited and had all basic utilities. The historical nature had been obscured by additions. The former owner was not aware of the extent of the home's antiquity; historical nature,

Restoration Process

4-Was the property already listed as a historical monument? Yes/No No. I haven't listed it. If no,

what steps (if any) did you take to have it listed as such?

5-Did you consult any authorities/experts before beginning the restoration process? Which ones would you recommend to future property owners wishing to restore a historic structure?

Absolutely. I had an architectural historian to research the house immediately. I then consulted with all whom I knew that spoke English and were acquainted with the property. This included members of Banska Stiavnica's preservation group which is largely composed of historical architects.

6-What steps did these authorities/experts recommend you take to restore this property? *First of all: 1) restore the integrity of the walls, 2) take steps to draw water/moisture away from the masonry of the house, and 3) remove the enamel paint, especially from the wood.*

7-What written materials would you recommend to future historic property restorers?

A well-illustrated dictionary is a help; anything to help understanding of the Slovak language. My house history was valuable. Also, in Banska Stiavnica, Andrea Niznansky's photographic studies are enlightening and a good reference.

8-What steps did you actually take in the restoration process (just a brief outline; please list as close as possible to the order in which they were begun)? *My contribution was far and in large answering the questioned posed by my architect as to my preferences. I certainly went to many sites to observe historical features and architectural remedies as a part of this consultation.*

9-What do you still hope to accomplish (if anything) in further restoring this property (please list in the order you wish to begin them)? *There are some architectural features that I might invest in if my prosperity continues; perhaps a fireplace, a shingle(traditional) roof and the addition of a Slovak outdoor fireplace/outdoor cookery.*

10-Is there anything you discovered during this process that you wish you had known from the beginning?

Every bit of Slovak language is a help. The 19%VAT is something to pay attention to when calculating one's expenses.

11-What other advice would you offer to foreign individuals hoping to undertake a similar restoration project?

You must be on site. It is unreasonable to imagine that details can be largely delegated. A good superintendent is a very desirable person to employ.

Additional Questions for William Byers:

1- You mentioned you were working with an architect and an architectural historian. At what point in the process did you hire him/her? How did you find him/her?

I hired the historian immediately. This was to confirm my belief that the house was much older than the former owner had speculated. This the historian confirmed to me in a written and authorized document which I commissioned. Peter Niznansky, historical architect, was mentioned in my first correspondence with a native. He was very sought after and I could not engage him directly until last year although he did consult w/ my overseer about reconstruction of the walls around my house which were redone beginning in 2007. I had befriended a Slovak girl in my hometown here in the states whose help in translating and making connections in Banska Stiavnica were invaluable. Her mother had recently lived there.

2- When did you find out that the house was contiguous to the historic zone (was that information

shared made known to you before you bought the house, or did you discover that in your research)?

As a contiguous property, was it required that you fill out the applications from the Slovak Monuments Board (Pamiatkovy Urad) for historic buildings before beginning with construction? The former owner mentioned that efforts had been made by some preservation entity to get her to include her house as an historic property which she declined because she anticipated stringent restrictions in remodeling had she accepted. I felt that my best course was to proceed with restoration in conformance to topmost preservation standards. I have tried to do this but my architect has handled all the details. I feel that he is superlatively qualified to do this .

3- You mentioned that the year of construction was 2009. Was that the year you did your reconstruction or the original year of construction. Do you know approximately the year it was built originally?

My house is recorded as long as records of such has been kept. That is only about 1739, although the architectural historian said that its' existence in 1700 could be inferred and my architect has mentioned that some details could precede these dates; specifically, the wooden joinery in the back of the house. 2009 was the year we began reconstruction of the house in earnest.

4- Finally, how did you find the historic preservation group you mentioned in Banska Stiavnica? Do you have any contact information for them?

Association for Banska Stiavnica '91. They are my neighbors in 5 Remeselnicka. Katarina Voskova and Peter Niznansky and Pavel Fabian important members. Google them.

Elizabeth Yenchko

Owner's Name and country of origin: Elizabeth Yenchko (USA) & Juraj Kittler (SK)

Property name: residence Katova 2, Banská Štiavnica

Property Type (house, industrial building, ect.): house

Year of construction: approx. 1750-1800

Part of historic zone: yes/no YES

Initial Assessment

1. Why did you choose a property in Slovakia?

I lived there 10 years, wanted to have a historic home instead of an apartment, plan on returning to resume residence there someday

2. For what purpose do you wish to restore/did you restore this building?

residence

3. Please briefly describe the condition of the property when you first bought it:

No inside toilet, only one sink with cold water faucet, 5 electric ceiling lights, had been remodeled in 1950's & all original smaller casement windows had been removed and replaced with large "trojaky", had asbestos shingle roof dating from 1950s when roof structure was rebuilt – house had been hit by a grenade during WWII. Wood parquet/plank floors were rotted with fungus, dirt floor in pantry, plaster walls (on stone) had rising damp and were effluorescing badly.

Restoration Process

4. Was the property already listed as a historical monument? Yes/No
Was already part of MPR – historic zone
If no, what steps (if any) did you take to have it listed as such?
5. Did you consult any authorities/experts before beginning the restoration process? Which ones would you recommend to future property owners wishing to restore a historic structure?
At the time, I was an employee of Pamiatkový ústav, my colleagues were the architects on our projects and constant consultants. In the US I was a historic preservation contractor for 16 years prior to coming to SK, so had a working knowledge of what was necessary to do. Owners would do best to partner with their local Pamiatkový úrad, even consulting before they buy the property
6. What steps did these authorities/experts recommend you take to restore this property?
Using authentic/original materials, doing research on the structure to locate original openings, etc.
7. What written materials would you recommend to future historic property restorers?
Study historic Czechoslovak architecture books appropriate to the period/style of the building and note how the buildings were originally outfitted and appointed. Especially the Mencl books for rural architecture.
8. What steps did you actually take in the restoration process (just a brief outline; please list as close as possible to the order in which they were begun)?
Design work
Architectural research on the building (both pictorial and actual architectural archeology on site
Selecting contractors (a big problem in rural areas – one must depend on local ‘experts’ who probably don’t do the work the way a foreigner might be accustomed to having it done – both craftsmanship wise, timeline wise, procedurally (drinking on the jobsite) and contractually.
We had one General contractor for the heavy work (demolition, digging for plumbing, septic tank and groundwater/rainwater draining, etc.) and then flooring contractor (wood floors), electrician, plumber, roofer, plasterer. We did the painting and delicate finish work ourselves
9. What do you still hope to accomplish (if anything) in further restoring this property (please list in the order you wish to begin them)?
Design and reconstruction of attic space into second apartment (next 2-3 years – 2010 to 2012)
10. Is there anything you discovered during this process that you wish you had known from the beginning?
The persistence of “drevomorka” fungus and what steps are necessary to take to re mediate or prevent its occurrence short of installing concrete floors in a masonry structure.
11. What other advice would you offer to foreign individuals hoping to undertake a similar restoration project?
be flexible, partner with Pamiatkový úrad at the outset, find an architect, contractor and craftspeople who understand and love historic buildings and authentic materials...there are plenty of these type of folks who would rather sell you asphalt shingle roofs, plastic windows, concrete floors, etc.

Second Questionnaire

- 1- Would it have been helpful to have such a document in your hands as you began this process?
- 2- Do I have any facts wrong?

3- Is it all right with you that I quote you specifically, or would you rather remain anonymous?

4- Are any parts confusing/unclear/unhelpful? Can you think of any possible improvements in the content?

5- Would it have been helpful to include a Slovak-English dictionary of some of the more commonly used terms that you came across?

6- Would you recommend the inclusion of any other aspects of the restoration process? (for example, something that was particularly difficult to navigate in your restoration process?)

Responses

William Byers

In Bratislava there is an excellent bookstore on the thoroughfare directly across from the Michael's Gate on the same street as the Slovak Pub but nearer the Michael's Gate. I believe that it will be the first bookstore(Knihy) that you'll come to. The language section is on the second floor. You should at least peruse this volume to see what I mean. Especially check out the "home" section and see why I think that it is indispensable. The cover is mostly burgundy and white to aid in your search. When the SAS language school was in session this book sold out and I have retrieved it to the States for someone planning a trip hither.

Let me know what you think.

There exists a specific illustrated dictionary(in Slovak that's "ilustrovany slovník") that is invaluable to anyone residing for a time in Slovakia. The inverse Slovak version, that is Slovak into English(as opposed to English into Slovak), is very popular and accessible. I don't have mine w/ me at the moment(I am resident in Banská Štiavnica) but I will get back to you with the exact information. It is so very helpful that I feel it would be beneficial to tout it. This book entitled: Dvojjazyčný ILUSTROVANÝ slovník[(two languages illustrated dictionary) bilingual visual dictionary]is published by Dorling Kindersley Book, a Penguin Company(www.slovart.sk and www.dk.com) is a must. It is soooooo helpful for matriculating in Slovakia. If you are planning on staying longer you should acquire one. It's essential.

Brad and Karla Thiessen

1- Would it have been helpful to have such a document in your hands as you began this process?
Maybe. Depends on how specific it is to our situation.

2- Do I have any facts wrong?
Yes. I'll try to help you with that. [she called me to explain]

3- Is it all right with you that I quote you specifically, or would you rather remain anonymous?
rather remain anonymous as owners of the Kastiel in Cecejovce

[questions 4 and 5 not answered]

6- Would it have been helpful to include a Slovak-English dictionary of some of the more commonly used terms that you came across? *Yes*

[as of 18th June, 2010, Elizabeth Yenchko has not responded to this particular communication]