**Dutch Ovens, a Brief History**

Dutch oven cooking is nothing new as Dutch ovens have been around for thousands of years. The earliest Dutch ovens were likely clay pots with lids that were burried with hot coals in much the same way that some people use Dutch ovens today when making long, slow cook recipes. In colonial times, the Dutch oven was a prized family heirloom. During that time it was against the law to produce iron in the colonies. Dutch ovens and all other metal goods had to be imported from England and were quite expensive. As a result cast iron cooking utensiles such as Dutch ovens were often passed down from one generation to the next. As our nation expanded, the Dutch oven followed settlers westward and became the standard for "cowboy cooking", fueling the pioneers that tamed the west.

The Dutch oven along with other cast iron cookware fell out of favor after the 1940's as newer, lighter materials and engineered non-stick coatings replaced cast iron for use in the manufacture of cookware. Fortunately, cast iron cooking appears to be making a comeback as people rediscover the Dutch oven and the great meals that can be prepared using cast iron cookware.