

# The concept of the term redneck



Redneck had several meanings and had been used in the history in different ways. The meaning of the word had revolved from a historic meaning to a stereotype in the modern era. The dictionary Meriam-Webster defines redneck as weary. It is also defined as a white member of the Southern rural class. Another meaning of the word according to Wilton, redneck can be defined as someone with a red neck which had been caused by anger. Redneck had also been used literally. This would be furthered discussed in the next few paragraphs. The earliest documented use of the term redneck dates back in the year 1638.

Todd Wilkinson (2007) had stated in his article that the term is Scottish. The redneck word had been referred to as the supporters of the National Covenant, and the Solemn League and Covenant which can be also called the "Covenanters". The Covenanters which were mostly Presbyterians had tried to flee from Scotland to go to Northern Ireland during the persecutions by the British Crown. During this time, the Covenanters signed in the documents which states that Scotland had desired a Presbyterian form of church government and they would not want accept the Church of England as the official state church.

Many of the Covenanters had use their own blood to sign and had worn red pieces of cloth around their necks as a distinctive symbol. This had become the reason why the Covenanters had been called rednecks. In present time, the term had still been used for the Scottish who had settled in North Ireland that were Presbyterian. The term redneck had also been used in America but in a different way from that of the Scots. Laborers who had spent hours

working in the field had shown red necks because of hard work in the fields under the heat of the sun.

The effect of decades of direct sunlight on the exposed skin of the back of the neck not only reddens fair skin, but renders it leathery and tough, and typically very wrinkled and spotted by late middle age. Similarly, some historians claim that the term redneck originated in 17th-Century Virginia, because indentured servants were sun burnt while tending plantation crops. The effects of working under the sun for years had exposed the skin at the back of the neck. The exposure of the back of the neck had reddened the skin which had made it very tough, leathery and wrinkled.

This had become the reason for the term redneck. Since the term had been associated with slave life, this had been used in the post-reconstruction era in the 19th century. Slave life and the the poor rural white had been compared and the rednecks were used for the slaves. In 1910, the use of the term redneck had been associated to the gradual disenfranchisement of the Southern lower class for both the black and the white. Another theory related to the origin of the term redneck is when there was a clash between the United Mine Workers and the owners.

The workers had use red bandannas tied around their neck to signify union affiliation. According to Kim Pearson, aside from the historical origins of the term redneck, a disease has also been associated with the term. This is called Pellagra. Pellagra is a disease caused by vitamin deficiency. The word was also associated with a person who is very slow, shallow in thought and regulated to the rural areas. A redneck person is also deemed as someone

out of their element when introduced to new ideas. This is not only applicable for persons but it was also applied to media.

Stereotypes include some types of country music, television shows, movies and comedians. Modern Usage of the word had shown that rednecks had been used for whites from the Southern United States. The word had been used to stereotype several persons belonging to a particular category.

Rednecks are associated with a person who is socially conservative, liberal, rural and within the working class with a northern European Ancestry. In popular culture, as defined in bsornot. net, a male redneck is a straight guy with a beer belly. The male usually consumes cheap American beer by the case.

These male persons are viewed as someone very distrustful of anyone different from them and also the government. The home of these stereotyped males is a trailer and deemed to drive a beat-up old truck with a gun in the rear window. The man is seen wearing a sleeveless t-shirt, jeans and a trucker hat. The hair and the teeth of the stereotypical male redneck is few and he has damaged teeth. If there are redneck males, there are also redneck females. The females also have the same characteristics as that of the males and their interests is on the feminine side.

Females are viewed mostly with barefoot, pregnant or someone who wears Daisy Duke shorts with stiletto Heels. The term redneck as discussed above had been used in many ways. This only shows that the meaning of the word depends on what or how you use it. A particular word can be used as a symbol, a stereotype or as something to describe a situation. Literally,

redneck means a person with a red neck. However, looking at the context discussed above, the meaning of the word had already evolved from a sign of protest to a stereotype meaning today.