


—HEADQUARTERS—  
OF THE  
**Boot and Shoemakers' White Labor League,**  
SHOEMAKERS' HALL,  MISSION ST.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

*TO THE MEMBERS OF THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE OF CALIFORNIA:*

GREETING: We, the members of the Boot and Shoe Makers' White Labor League, beg leave to call your attention to the resolution passed by your State Executive Committee at their meeting held in San Francisco January 11, 1891, as follows:

"We hereby recommend an early conference with our State Business Manager in order to settle the preliminary steps necessary to be taken, and under his direction we will use all reasonable measures to aid in extending the work and influence of the Boot and Shoemakers' White Labor League of our State."

You will be aiding the White Shoemakers of our State by buying the goods made by them, and our White Labor League Stamp, impressed plainly on the bottom of every pair, is the only proof and guaranty of their being the production of white mechanics.

All Boots or Shoes bearing this Stamp are made of whole stock, without shoddy, and will wear better than any other sold at the same price.

Therefore, you will readily see that it will not only be CHEAPER for you to buy Boots and Shoes bearing the White Labor League Stamp, but you will at the same time be helping the White Shoemakers of this city and State to support themselves and families. The Stamp of the Boot and Shoe Makers' White Labor League (a fac simile of which appears at the head of this circular,) has been issued to twelve different manufacturers, who employ about 1000 men and 700 girls, representing a total of over 5000 people depending on this industry for their livelihood.

No manufacturer using this Stamp is permitted to employ Chinese in the making of Boots or Shoes, and for this reason our Stamp on a Boot or Shoe is the only positive proof that it was made by White Labor

Address all communications to

**ALEXIS SULLIVAN,**

General Secretary Boot and Shoemakers' White Labor League,

 **Please keep this for reference.**

# BOOT AND SHOEMAKERS' WHITE LABOR LEAGUE NOTICE

## Group Assignment

### INTRODUCTION

After the transcontinental railroad was completed, many Chinese laborers moved to factories in San Francisco. The new railroad allowed goods produced in eastern factories to be shipped to the West. Factories on the West Coast felt pressure to cut labor costs in order to lower their prices to compete with the eastern goods. Chinese workers were available and willing to work for lower wages. Shoe manufacturing was one industry that was particularly hard-hit by the influx of eastern goods, and it was one of the industries that hired large number of Chinese.

The railroad also made it easy for workers to come west, seeking jobs that could not be found in the East which was suffering from a post-Civil war depression. Out West, workers found that many factory jobs were filled by Chinese workers. This was also a time when unions were being organized, and the unions began to mount a campaign against the employment of Chinese. As long as employers were willing to hire cheaper Chinese labor, the effectiveness of union pressure was limited.

This notice, although distributed nine years after the Exclusion Act was passed, addresses labor concerns that resulted in the passage of the Exclusion Act.

### DIRECTIONS

1. After reading the announcement by the Boot and Shoemakers' White Labor League, discuss the following questions with your group. Be sure one person takes notes.
  - a. When was this notice written?
  - b. What are the concerns of the workers regarding Chinese labor?
  - c. What are they asking members of the Farmers' Alliance to agree to?

## **I** The Chinese Experience in 19th Century America

- d. Is this boycott similar to the “Made in the U.S.A.” label that appears on many manufactured goods now? How is it similar and how is it different? Who benefits from the low cost of consumer goods that are imported from developing countries?
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2. Imagine yourselves in the position of these 19th century farmers in California. Prepare a written response for Alexis Sullivan expressing your group’s position regarding the boycott. Address the following questions in your response:
    - a. Are the workers’ concerns justified?
    - b. Is the boycott an appropriate and effective way of addressing their concerns?
    - c. Will your group support the boycott? Why or why not?
    - d. How else could the shoe workers deal with their concerns for their wages, jobs, and ability to support their families?