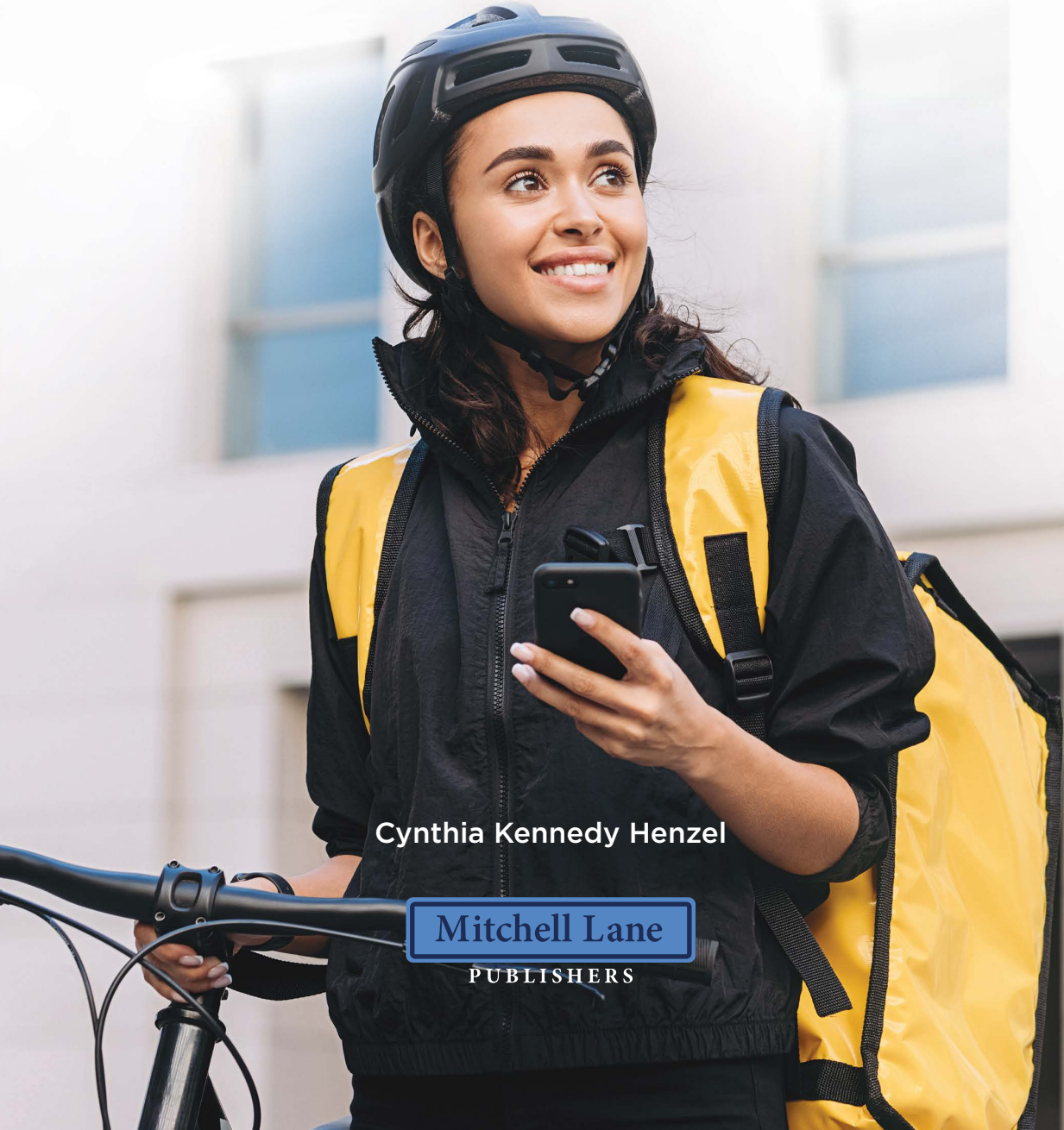




The Gig Economy

MAKING A LIVING FROM TEMPORARY JOBS



Cynthia Kennedy Henzel

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Chapter 1

The History of Gig Work





The word *gig* was first used by jazz musicians in the early 1900s. Musicians would take a one-time job, or gig, to play at a club. Today, the word *gig* applies to short-term work that may consist of dog walking, food delivery, or building websites. The term *gig economy*, which was first used by former *New Yorker* editor Tina Brown, describes the part of the workforce that makes a living one gig at a time.

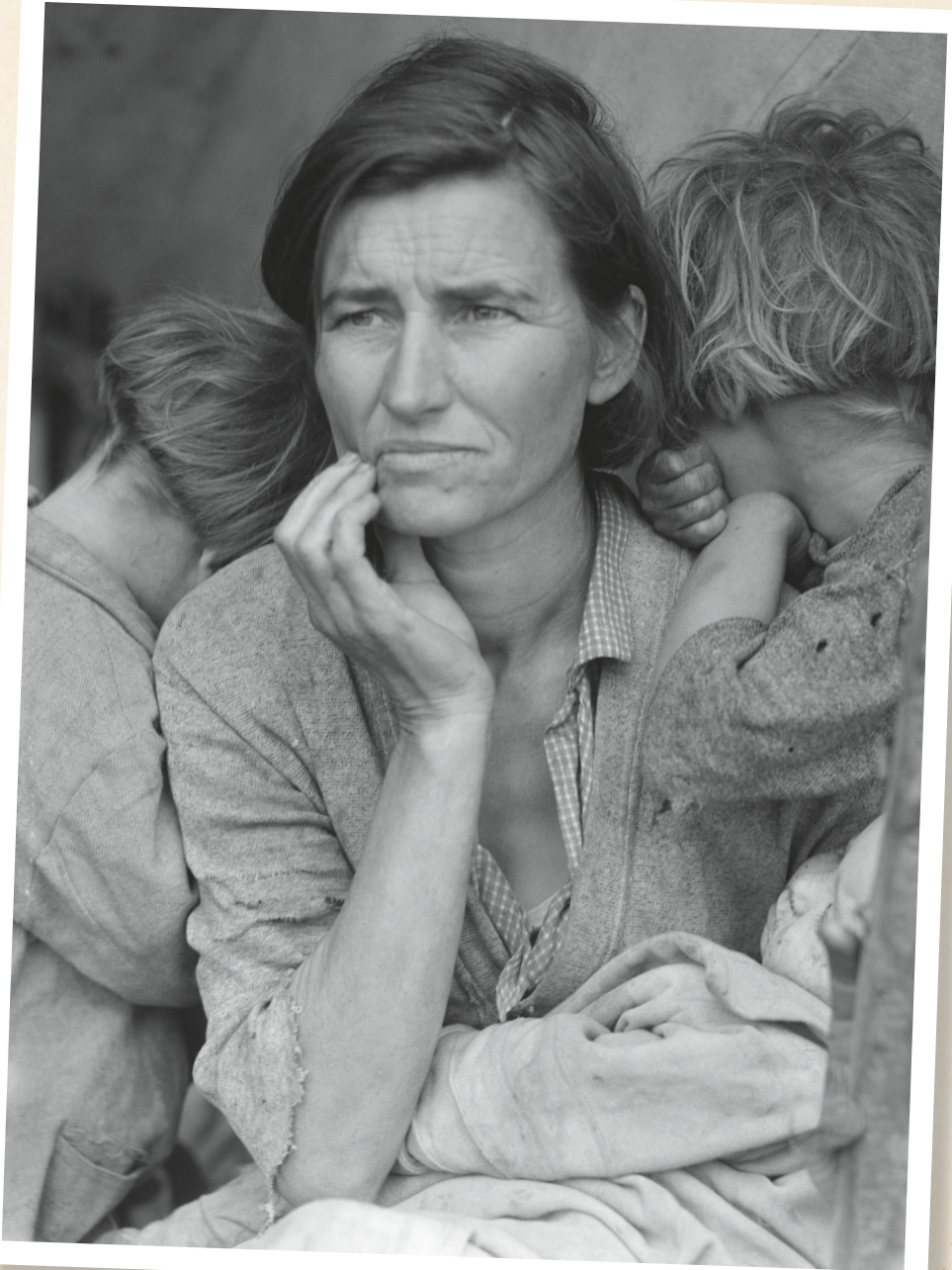
Gig work isn't new. Tawny Paul is a social and economic historian at the University of California Los Angeles. She explained during an interview with *The Conversation* that before the Industrial Revolution (1733–1913) “most people worked multiple jobs to piece together a living.”

CHAPTER ONE

As industries grew, many people went to work in factories. But during the Great Depression in the 1930s, people struggled financially. Many of them lost their jobs during this time. People often turned to gig work to pay expenses when they couldn't find a steady job.

After World War II (1939-1945), the economy bounced back. Employers then had too few workers. Businesses called temp agencies supplied short-term workers to fill jobs. People registered with a temp agency. The agency would then match their skills, such as typing, with a business that needed that skill.

The History of Gig Work



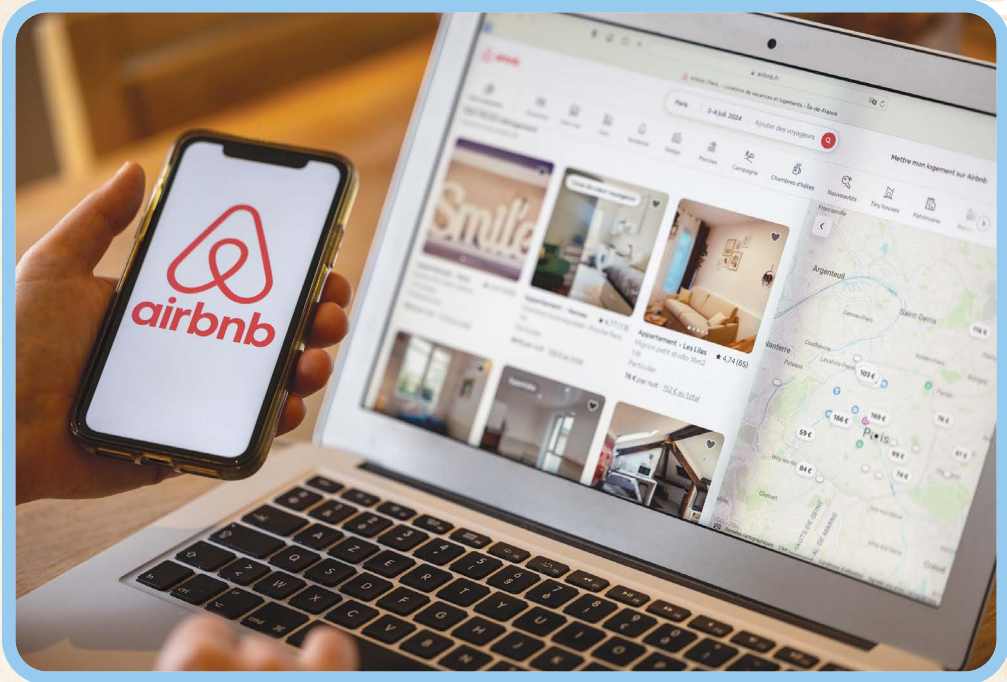
The Great Depression was a time of hardship for many families.

CHAPTER ONE

The Internet

For many decades, people searched for jobs in newspaper ads. When people began using the Internet in the mid-1990s, a new way to find work emerged. In 1995, Craig Newmark began Craigslist as an email list about events happening in California's San Francisco area. Soon, people began posting jobs to the site. Today, billions of people visit Craigslist each month to view job listings, items for sale, and more.

Airbnb was founded in 2008. This gig lets people earn extra cash by renting out extra space, such as a vacation house or an extra room in their home. Airbnb gives many vacationers a less expensive option than staying in hotels.



Air Mattresses and Breakfast

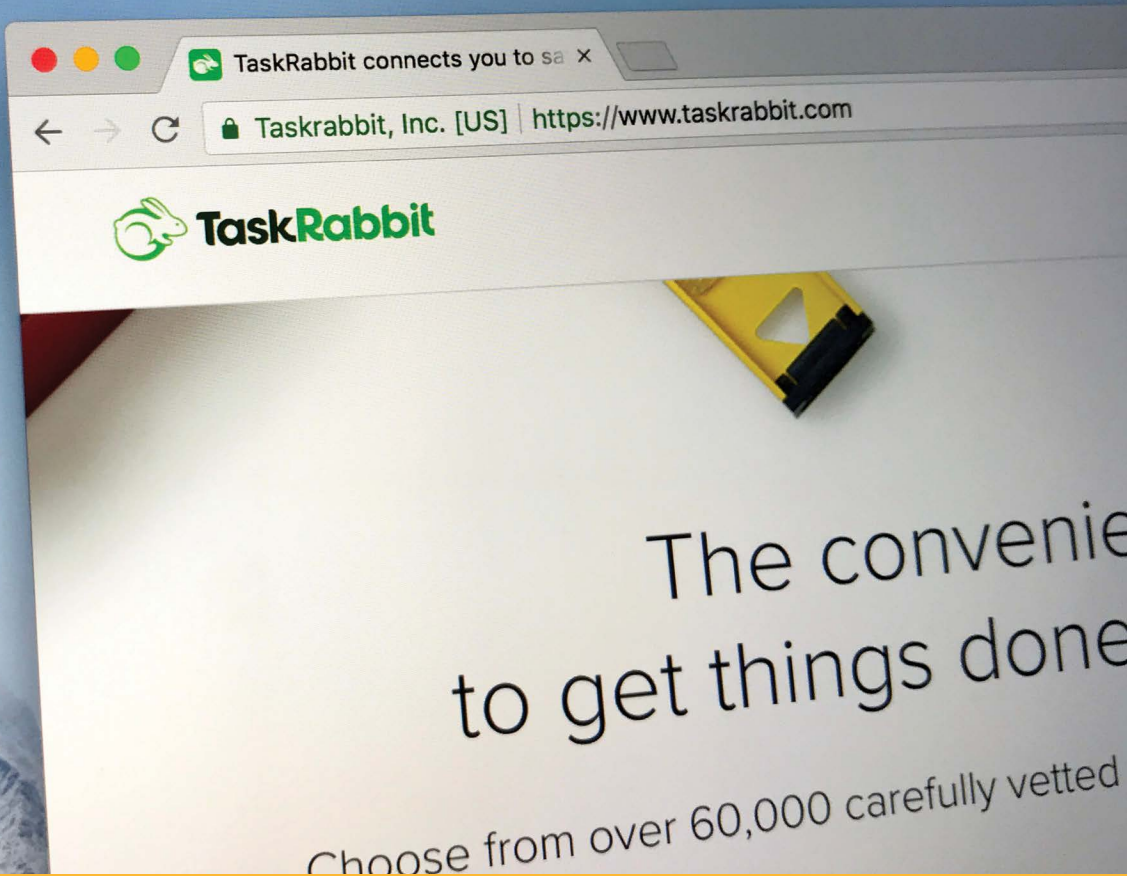
Joe Gebbia and Brian Chesky needed extra money to pay their rent. They came up with the idea of renting air mattresses in their loft and providing breakfast for guests that needed a short-term place to stay. The name of their original website was airbedandbreakfast.com. Along with a third partner, Nathan Blecharczyk, Airbnb became a multi-billion-dollar company.

CHAPTER ONE

Many people also began working with companies such as Uber and TaskRabbit around this time. These are online businesses that connect their customers with gig workers. Uber began in 2009. People order a ride through the Uber app on their smartphone. A gig worker registered with the company provides the ride.

TaskRabbit matches customers with people willing to do a variety of household chores. According to an article on *The Verge* website by tech writer Casey Newton, TaskRabbit was founded by a person who wished the service existed. “Leah Busque realized she needed to buy dog food but didn’t have time to get it herself.”

The History of Gig Work



TaskRabbit does a background check on people who register to perform tasks on their platform.

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