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Airfreight continued growing like Jack's beanstalk during 1949, but it retained some of the circuslike aura that attended its birth pangs of four and five years ago.

American Airlines, the nation's first and most extensive Airfreight carrier, jumped its volume an estimated 40% last year to about 32,600,000 ton miles from 1948's record 23,204,517. At the same time, airport freight handlers enjoyed an increase in guffaws.

A Philadelphia printer last fall sealed a print order valued at a million dollars into cartons and rushed them to an American Airlines plane. They arrived in Boston to be met by a police escort, who guarded them on the route from the airport to Fenway Park. But the million dollars worth of baseball tickets took a nose dive in value when the Red Sox failed to clinch the pennant.

The year's loudest airborne item gave a turn to Airfreight agents at Bridgeport, Conn., who were holding a shipment from the New Haven Clock Company for a scheduled flight to Little Rock, Ark. Shortly before departure a mighty carolling pealed forth from the boxes containing 300 alarm clocks. In his haste to get them to the airport, it seems the manufacturer had failed to turn off the alarms that had been set for simultaneous eruption.

Nashville's biggest monkey hunt--and perhaps its first-- stemmed from the humanitarian impulse of Airfreight men there who felt exercise was in order for two monks who had flown from the Celebes. The chase led all over the airport and ended only when one of the creatures took a liking for an American Airlines agent and swung down from a steam pipe to give him a hug.

The other joined the love match eventually, which proves the beginning of love can be the end of freedom.

Along with a number of live seals shipped from the west coast to a New York zoo came a box of raw fish and instructions for feeding the seals en route. It wasn't until an agent almost lost a couple of fingers that anyone knew what the instructions failed to state. You toss a seal his fish.

The animal department met new highs during 1949 with lion cubs, a bear cub, orangutans, chimpanzees, worms, ants, apes, deer, pigeons, a lone canary and even the Democratic party donkey taking to the air. The political character Airfreighted its way to Providence, R.I., to attend a banquet at which Senator (now Attorney General) J. Howard McGrath was the guest of honor.

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