



The Goodyear blimp, Columbia, comes in for a landing in Vancouver. The Columbia is 192 feet long, 59 feet high and 50 feet wide. The car, which is 23 feet long, carries six passengers and pilot. The ship is driven by twin Continental engines (6 cylinders, 210 hp each), with a maximum speed of 50 mph and a cruising speed of 35 mph. The envelope is made of rubber-coated polyester fabric.



Unthank (Malcolm X) Park



Senior Pilot John Crayton prepares to take off. (above) Observer photographer Dan Long takes the controls. (left)

A team of specialists operate the Goodyear blimp. The Columbia has a staff of five pilots, seventeen ground crewmen and a public relations representative. Ground crewmen, in addition to handling the ship during takeoffs, landings and moorings, serve as radio technicians, mechanics, riggers, electricians, sign specialists and clerks.



Emanuel Hospital



Northeast Portland -- Ainsworth Street in center, Bethel AME Church to right. (below)

The Columbia is one of a fleet of four Goodyear blimps, that trace their ancestry back almost 200 years -- to 1783, when the Montgolfier brother of France launched the first lighter-than-air device -- a 35-foot hot air balloon made of paper.

Although there is only one type of

lighter-than-air craft still in operation, airships have been classified as rigid, semi-rigid and non-rigid. Rigid ships, such as the Zeppelins, had metal frameworks to maintain their shape. The lifting gas was in cells within the framework.

The semi-rigid ship had a rigid or joint-

ed hull which ran the length of the envelope.

In the non-rigid models, such as the Columbia, the envelope shape is maintained entirely by internal pressure of the helium lifting gas aided by air cells or "ballonets" to compensate for pressure differences.



Photos by Dan Long



Looking north on Union Avenue.