

Four Escape Mine Death

SILVERTON, Colo., Jan. 10 — (AP)—Crawling on their stomachs through a ventilation hole, four men escaped from the smoke that killed eight fellow workers yesterday in a gold-silver mine.

In the excitement of battling fire in mine buildings and attempting to rescue the eight victims, would-be rescuers did not generally know until today of the quartet's escape.

Working on the 500-foot level of the Pride of the West mine, "Swede" Wilson, Frank Jenkins, Ed Peterson and Elmer Hanson smelled the smoke spiralling up the main shaft from the entrance below, sensed their danger immediately, and wriggled single-file through the vent to fresh air just ahead of the black, deadly fumes.

Eight Others Trapped

On the 300-foot level, the eight other miners tried vainly to climb up the main shaft but were forced by the smoke to retreat into a 3,000-foot dead-end tunnel.

Their bodies were found at the tunnel's end by searchers who entered the mine when the flames in the blazing compressor house at the mine entrance had subsided.

The hands of all eight were scratched and bloody. As they became too weak to stand, they fell headlong on the tunnel floor and dug desperately into the earth with their fingers in a frantic struggle for air.

About 100 men from near-by mines and the town of Silverton tried for hours to revive the eight.

Those who perished were Frank Moser of Ouray, Claude and Frank Pacotti of Durango, and Albert Van Arsdale, O. E. Nelson, John Aldrich, Harold Holsten and Howard Atkin, all of Silverton.

An inquest probably will be held Monday. No funeral plans will be made until after the coroner's investigation. The bodies are in Silverton.

Mine To Be Checked

A U. S. Bureau of Mines representative today went to the mine, six miles north of here, with air testing equipment. He will inspect the mine tomorrow to determine whether it is safe.

In addition to the compressor house, the fire destroyed the mine's machine shop, hoist, boarding house and abandoned mill. The fire started from an oil explosion in the machine shop and spread rapidly to the other buildings. The cause of the explosion remained undetermined tonight.