Early descriptions commonly reported that Butte was a prodigious, fascinating, rough and ready town, particularly on Saturday when the miners were paid—"a veritable Petticoat's day." But the writer never witnessed that companionship. There is no lack of literature providing a view of the life in the boom town of Butte.

In 1883, mining changed to the open-pit method. The pros and cons of the development of the Berkeley Pit by the Anaconda Company have been weighed, vigorously debated, and optimized over the years. No doubt, its development was necessary in the economic survival of the area, but undeniable, the price was high. During the course of its widening expansion, the pit consumed three communities, an entirely new situation when compared to other deep mines, and its growth has certainly affected the economic base of the region. From the viewing platform today, overlooking the pit to the northeast, a few remaining trees and street grids can still be seen that outline a portion of the former size of McQueen and East Butte. The locality of Meadaville has been entirely eliminated by the pit.

On April 30, 1992, a management decision by Atlantic Richfield (the parent company), resulted in the closure of the Berkeley Pit operation. Following a short period of blasted, open-pit mining continued, however, the area was shrunk by the BLM. As the pit continued to grow, called the contaminated Pos, it is currently a 490-acre area mantled by 120 ft of toxic Pb/Zn/Sn production of 160,000 ton of ore, of which 90% of the copper and 60% of the incineration is recovered by the concentrator in the mining process. The geology of the Berkeley area is briefly described as being a hydrothermally high temperature deposed network of veins and dissemina- tions of copper sulfide minerals occurring in a host rock termed the Butte Quartz Monzonite of the Bostler batholith. The age of the batholith is approximately 100 million years old. The ore shoots in the Butte area were the sites of at least three or more separate stages of ore deposition. The total volume of the mineralized zone has been described in the range of about 50 to 100 million cubic feet. The principal copper minerals of the ore body are chalcocite, chalcopyrite, bornite (peacock copper), azurite, and smaltite. The grade of the copper ore averaged approximately 5.72 percent.