

Soon after the Lawrence to Carbondale branch was completed, the railroad ran out of funds and subsequently halted any other planned forms of construction or expansion that it had. The StLL&D was forced to rely on the passage of bonds in each respective county and township that it passed through to continue expanding and was at a considerable disadvantage to railroads such as the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe who had in the past, and could continue to rely on federal land grants to speed the growth of the railroad along with easing the economic burden. In 1874, the railroad's name was changed to the St. Louis, Lawrence and Western. The StLL&W also proved to be a non-viable railroad and was offered up for sale in 1875. At this time, preparations were made to dispose of the Lawrence-Carbondale branch which had experienced decreasing profits as the coal mines on Carbon Hill were gradually played out. At this time, a Carbondale lawyer by the name of S.B. Bradford secured an injunction against the tearing up of the track and the road was again put into operation.

The Union Pacific purchased from the StLL&W the Carbondale to Lawrence segment later that year. Following its purchase by the Union Pacific, it was operated as the Lawrence and Southwestern, then, under the name "Carbondale Branch" and finally as the Lawrence and Emporia after July 19, 1881. This seems to indicate that the Union Pacific had expansion ideas of its own, probably through the towns of Burlingame and Osage City to the southwest. At this time, a line was graded for such an expansion possibility, to Osage City, but was never built. In any event, the existing line did a moderate passenger and freight business for a few years thereafter. A total of 1,511 passengers were carried during the year ending June 30, 1883 and the traffic increased thereafter to a grand total of over 17,000 passenger-freight miles in 1886. The following year, however, only mixed train service was offered, and the number of passengers carried fell back to 1,054. Perhaps an insignificant growth of economic development along the line was to blame, but the Lawrence and Emporia suffered a rapid