The Russell & Company had its roots all the way back to 1842. Originally carpenters, the trio of Russell brothers – Charles, Nahum, and Clement – formed the C.M. Russell & Co. in 1942 to make threshers and horse powers after their carpentry shop burned down.

In 1846, the citizens of Massillon realized they needed a railroad. The Russell brothers not only bought stock in the Ohio & Pennsylvania Railroad to urge it to come though Massillon, but also built railroad handcars and stock cars for the company.

In 1887, Russell offered the 6 horsepower, which was equipped with self-adjusting piston rings, which freed up the task of lubrication. In the same year, Russell & Co. also create a 10-horsepower model, which included the patented features of a friction clutch, reverse gear, equilibrium valve, and boiler. In 1891, The 10-horsepower model, along with their 13-horsepower and 16-horsepower models, included a throttle lever, brake lever, steam chest, and reverse lever.

Along with the engines, Russell produced a full line of threshing machines, horsepowers, railroad cars, sawmills, and other farm equipment. Russell was one of the largest employers in Massillon for many years.

Like many of the other successful steam-engine builders, Russell was late to make a move toward gas-powered equipment. However, in 1909 they produced their first gas-powered tractor. Russell tractors were solidly built, like all of their products, but they were not particularly innovative, which perhaps cost them a significant part of the market share.

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