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He next beat the top edge (the edge that will fit up into the wood) to a thin, feather edge. It is not simply a matter of heating and beating. The flattening and drawing out of both sides of the top edge tends to bring the bottom edge arcing around • and the bottom must be flat. So, beginning at the heel, he heated the metal and beat his way toward the toe, working on a few inches each heating. He beat on one side, then the other • and the top edge thinned and the whole bar bent. He put the bar on edge and straightened it out. Then he heated the bar, thinned some more on each side, and straightened it out again. The feathered portion runs straight until just before the upturn at the toe. Here he draws the metal out beyond the feathered edge, to a sort of hump that will go up further into the wood. This hump he heated and punched through. In the photograph, John Angus MacQueen, a blacksmith from Little River, is holding the blade in tongs with the hump just over an ordinary nut. When Alex Matheson punched, the punch went into the nut, making a clean hole. Then Alex heated the blade once more and rounded the front into a half circle over the horn of the anvil. The blades were sharpened on a grindstone, first squaring the bottom and then grinding the slightest concave groove running down the center the length of the blade. C(??)TINUED ON PAGE 20
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