Sid Swayse and the Horse Jump

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Legend

Informant: Cole Bunderson was born and raised in Castledale Utah in a Mormon family. After graduating from high school he served a Mormon mission in Micronesia and then intermittently attended school at Brigham Young University, University of Utah, and Utah State while working at a variety of jobs. He is currently 27 and was married about one and a half years ago.

Context:
Cole told me about this legend while we were at work at the Space Dynamics Laboratory. He informed me that the story is widely known and retold often in Emery County, especially among elementary and high school students.

Text:
In Emery county There’s an old story about something that happened in one of the slot canyons along the San Rafael River. There is one fairly narrow gap at the top of the specific location but it’s still pretty wide, like over 20 feet. A guy named Sid Swayse and his brother Charlie bet had a bet with some cattlemen that Sid could jump the slot canyon gap with his horse. The winner would take the others’ entire herd of cattle. Apparently Sid was able to make the jump and win the bet. To this day, the Swayses are huge cattlemen with many herds and gobs of land. They are the craziest people I know. Tough as nails. I remember Levi Swayse was one of the sons and was a grade below me in school. Tough as dirt. At my grade school there was a steep hill on the side of the school that was packed down hard because lots of kids played on it. Levi was chasing a kickball down the hill and turfed it hard going down the hill. I swear he slid for several feet on nothing but his nose and then pulled himself up and kept running. He should have been bawling, any second-grader would be.

Texture:
Cole was very enthusiastic as he told the story about Sid Swayse with very full hand gestures and exaggerated facial expressions. He made it very clear that the story is not only well known throughout Emery County, but widely believed because of the tough reputation of the Swayse Family