

**Map 13.2 Farnsworth's Brigade Attacks
the Confederate Right Flank
(5:30 – 6:00 p.m.)**

Kilpatrick led Farnsworth's brigade down Taneytown Road and overland to Big Round Top, where the column rested at 10:00 a.m. A short ride brought the brigade to Bushman's Hill, southwest of Big Round Top. Kilpatrick told Farnsworth, "Put your brigade in and commence fighting till Custer comes up. I will post the artillery." Farnsworth dutifully deployed his men in and around Bushman Woods as Lt. Samuel Elder's battery unlimbered atop Bushman's Hill. Farnsworth sent the 5th New York Cavalry to support the guns. The 1st Vermont Cavalry took the right flank, followed on its left by the 1st West Virginia Cavalry and the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry (Map A; No. 1). Farnsworth pushed out a skirmish line of four dismounted companies from the 1st Vermont Cavalry and two mounted companies backed them up. Scouts quickly returned at a gallop with news of enemy infantry in heavy numbers in front of them.³

The arrival of Farnsworth's brigade on the army's right flank created a stir at Brig. Gen. Evander Law's headquarters. Law had assumed command of Maj. Gen. John Hood's Division the day before when the division's leader was wounded by the explosion of an artillery round. Law ordered the veteran 1st Texas Infantry to abandon its skirmishing responsibilities at the base of Big Round Top and move to the threatened area (No. 2). The 1st Texas had seen heavy fighting on the afternoon and early evening of July 2 when it stormed Houck's Ridge and helped capture artillery pieces. The bloodshed cost the regiment dearly and fewer than 200 men were in the ranks on July 3.

The men of the 1st Texas sprinted toward a low stone wall about 200 yards from Bushman's Hill and their commander, Maj. Frederick Bass, spread them as thinly as possible to broaden his footprint (Map B; No. 3). The regiment was so under-strength, recalled one officer, that it did not have "men enough to have more than about one to every five or six steps." Several companies moved out on either side to protect the flanks. A skirmish line from the 47th Alabama (Law's Brigade, under Col. James Sheffield) fastened itself to the left flank of the 1st Texas and

extended it east toward Big Round Top. The rest of the brigade remained at the base of the hill with Brig. Gen. Jerome Robertson's Brigade on its right. Two batteries from Henry's Battalion, Capt. James Reilly's and Capt. William Bachmann's, supported the Texans.⁴

Pleasanton's orders to Kilpatrick, had the Texans been privy to them, would have caused some consternation: "press the enemy, to threaten him at every point and to strike at the first opportunity." As historian Edward Longacre put it, "If no such opportunity came about naturally, Kilpatrick planned to create one." Farnsworth's troopers were scrambling into position when the 10 Rebel guns dueled with Elder's four.

Kilpatrick decided the time had come to launch a full-scale attack on the Texans, and the 1st West Virginia Cavalry was given the dubious honor of making it. According to Capt. H. Parsons of the 1st Vermont Cavalry, "The 1st West Virginia charged . . . upon the 1st Texas regiment, which was in line behind a rail fence . . . A thin line shot forward and attempted to throw the rails, tugging at the stakes, cutting with their sabers, and falling in the vain effort."⁵

One Texan, Thomas McCarthy, recalled "[t]he ground trembled as they came, they rode down our skirmishers and charged us, and in a few seconds were on us" (No. 4). The veteran infantry waited until the Mountaineers were within 50 to 60 yards of the wall before opening fire. A section of Reilly's Battery moved directly behind the Texans. The sheets of flames belching from the Texans' barrels and canister rounds flying from Reilly's two guns killed and wounded many West Virginians and their horses, but the momentum of the charge carried the surviving horsemen into the Texans' position. "They went right through us cutting right and left," noted McCarthy as rifle butts, rocks, and flashing sabers bashed and cut in every direction. "In a few minutes great numbers of riderless horses were galloping around, and others with riders were trying to surrender," continued McCarthy, "a fusillade of shot and shell from Riley's Battery passed a couple of feet above our heads."

Col. Nathaniel Richmond, the 1st West Virginia Cavalry's commander, together with some of his troopers, had cleared the wall but realized they were trapped, turned, and cut their way through the Texans to safety.⁶