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On March 27, in the year of 1623, at the settlement of Wessagusset, two local native leaders and their company – including many women – and some English colonists assembled in a house, which was used as accommodation for native visitors. The native leaders had no suspicion; they lived relatively peacefully with the English settlers, especially with the inhabitants of Plymouth since their arrival at 1620. The natives also knew well their host, Miles Standish, who was the leader of the militia at Plymouth and one of the “Pilgrim Fathers”. If they even had a little suspicion, it faded away when the English greeted them with favor and presented them a table with different dishes, even with pork, what was one of the native’s most favorite dishes. Just after they started the meal, the English attacked them, and the native’s leader, Pecksuot, was killed by Standish with the chief’s own knife, while others killed the chief’s war leader. Later they executed – hanged – other four members of the native entourage, and others were thrown to iron.

If we look back to the past three years, until 1620, we can see that the settlers always tried to avoid the confrontation, fight and war with the natives, and tried to solve the problems with diplomatic methods. Now, however, they killed two chiefs of high rank, and other natives, meaning that the conflicts became deeper and worst than in the earlier times. It’s hard to reconstruct the events; the greatest problem is that we can only use European/settler written sources. However, if we not only examine the parts of the sources about the events, but the earlier times and focus on parts which seem unimportant at first sight, we can get closer to the solution.

We will see, that this conflict started in May, 1622, and grew slowly as the increasing number of the population, the unfertile soil, the weather and the mistakes made by the settlers together generated a massive crisis for the winter of 1622-23. It was known to be one of the coldest winters at that time, when even the Bosphorus and Golden Horn Bay had been frozen. The crisis ended with a solution, which is, compared with earlier ones, was different and had long term consequences.

In my presentation, I will present the events leading to the collapsing of a peaceful relationship. I will speak about the complex reasons of this crisis, such as the weather, diplomatic maneuvers, the mistakes of the settlers. I will also speak about the consequences. I will give a view into the sources, and explain the decisions of the settlers and their leaders, and why did they choose this way of solution of a crisis.