

History of the Serang Regent's Office its Role as the Center of Colonial Government in Serang Regency in 1829-1945

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui historis dari Sejarah Kantor Bupati Serang dan Perannya sebagai Pusat Pemerintahan Kolonial di Kabupaten (Regency) Serang pada tahun 1829-1945. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu menggunakan metode penelitian historis dibantu dengan teori cagar budaya, kolonialisasi dan munculnya kota kolonial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwasanya kantor Bupati Serang selesai dibangun pada tahun 1826 dan mulai aktif digunakan sebagai kantor Bupati Serang pada tahun 1829 setahun setelah perpindahan pusat pemerintahan dari Kaibon ke wilayah Serang. Pembangunan ini dilatarbelakangi oleh tidak efektifnya pusat pemerintahan di Kaibon dan kurang memadainya kantor-kantor pemerintahan pada kala itu. Dari awal dibangun bangunan ini sudah dirancang sebagai kantor dan sekaligus rumah dinas bagi para bupati Serang yang menjabat dan dijadikan sebagai pusat kegiatan pemerintahan kolonial, sekaligus pusat kegiatan masyarakat dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan, baik kehidupan beragama, kehidupan sosial masyarakat, dan kebudayaan.

Kata kunci: Kantor bupati serang, pusat pemerintahan kolonial, kabupaten serang.

Abstract

This research aims to determine the history of the Serang Regent's Office and its role as the Center of Colonial Government in Serang Regency in 1829-1945. The method used in this research is historical research methods assisted by the theory of cultural heritage, colonization and the emergence of colonial cities. The research results show that the Serang Regent's office was completed in 1826 and began to be actively used as the Serang Regent's office in 1829, a year after the government center moved from Kaibon to the Serang area. This development was motivated by the ineffectiveness of the central government in Kaibon and the lack of adequate government offices at that time. From the start, this building was designed as an office and official residence for the Serang regents who served and was used as the center of colonial government activities, as well as the center of community activities in various aspects of life, both religious life, social life and culture.

Keywords: serang regent's office, colonial government center, serang regency.

INTRODUCTION

In 1596, the Dutch arrived in Banten with four trading ships to buy spices. They wanted to make as much money as possible and compete with the Spanish and Portuguese. In 1603, the VOC trading office was set up in Banten, making it the first VOC office in all of Indonesia. This office was meant to control the trade in

Banten. However, the Sultan of Banten was strong and refused to let the VOC stay, so the office had to move to Jayakarta in 1611. From there, the VOC started to influence the economy and politics of Java. Eventually, the VOC ended its operations on December 31, 1799. After that, the Dutch government took control by creating the Dutch East

Indies government in the archipelago. (Mufti Ali dan Tessa Eka Darmayanti, 2014 : 1).

When the Sultanate was weakened by the VOC, it lost control over regional governance, and Banten's power came under the VOC until it went bankrupt in 1799. This trading company, which had grown into a state-like entity, was later taken over by the Dutch government, which ruled parts of the archipelago for nearly two centuries, from 1602 to 1799, including Banten. Herman William Daendels was appointed as the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies Government, serving as the highest authority in the first colony. Banten remained an important area for the colonial government. This is shown by the fact that Daendels divided the former sultanate into three districts. The new names of these districts did not come from the original local names, which once showed local power, but instead reflected the economic and political interests of the Dutch. (R. Sastro Wijono, 2017 : 132).

The destruction of the Surosowan palace started a new phase in the colonial time in Banten. The city center was moved, which changed how the Banten government worked, as the government had been based in the Surosowan Palace before. Under Syafiudin's rule, the government center, which had been destroyed, was moved to the Kaibon Palace. But this move didn't work well

because the whole sultanate had been broken down, both from the center and from problems inside the sultanate. Some local leaders, who were left from the old sultanate, stayed but acted like they were working for the colonial government. The Dutch East Indies government, which was seen as the official ruler, was controlled by the central government in Batavia. They managed the Banten Sultanate. To keep these local leaders loyal, the colonial government gave them some privileges and money, hoping this would reduce resistance from the people. In 1828, the main government office of the district was moved from Kaibon to the south, which led to the creation of the city of Serang. This change happened because Banten's economy, especially its port and Karangantu Market, was losing its importance. The development of Serang as a colonial city is shown by the building of European-style structures in the area where the local people lived. (Mufti Ali dan Tessa Eka Darmayanti, 2014 : 10).

Until now, Serang, which has been the main urban center of colonialism in Banten, has been split into two areas: the Regency and the City. This division is based on the long history of Banten's development. Because of this, many colonial buildings still exist and are kept in good condition, preserving the historical architecture from ancient times up to today. One example is the Regent's Office of Serang Regency, which is now

located in the middle of Serang City. With this background and a look back at the history of this building from the past to its current state, many researchers have become interested in studying further the history of how this office building was established during the colonial period. It is important to focus on protecting this building because cultural heritage sites are important symbols of history and should be kept safe. For these reasons, the author wants to do more research and share what they learn with colleagues in the History Education Study Program. The goal is to help them understand more about the history of this building, which is titled "History of the Serang Regent's Office and Its Role as the Colonial Center of the Serang Regency Government in 1829-1945." The study will look at two main questions: first, how the Serang Regent's Office was established as the center of the colonial government for the Serang Regency between 1829 and 1945, and second, what role the office played as the main center of the colonial government during that time.

METHODS

This research uses the historical method. The historical method is a way of looking at, explaining, and studying the past. Historical research involves carefully looking at and studying old records and objects from the past. Also, the historical method is about carefully examining,

explaining, and studying old records and things from the past. (Sjamsuddin, 2007:17).

The topic of this research is "The History of the Serang Regent's Office and Its Role as the Colonial Center of the Serang Regency Government from 1829 to 1945." Source searches were conducted in this study. The primary sources used in this research were archival documents and photographs:

- a) Decree of the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, contained in the Besluit En Bijlagen Archive document dated September 10, 1822, number 7, concerning the construction of the Banten Resident's Office.
- b) Photo of the Regent of Serang, Raden Toemenggoeng Pandji Gondo Koesomo, with staff from the Serang Afdeeling (Regency Office) in 1880.
- c) Photo of the atmosphere during the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday at the residence of the Assistant Resident of Serang (Pendopo Regent Serang) in 1920.
- d) Photo of Lebak Council Members at the Pendopo Serang in 1928.
- e) Photo of a map of the distribution of settlements and mosques in Serang in 1939, developed by the Topographic Bureau of the Dutch East Indies, Batavia.

- f) Photo of a map of the development of the colonial city of Serang in 1915, included in the Topographical Inrichting, Batavia.

The research focuses on "The History of the Serang Regent's Office and Its Role as the Colonial Center of the Serang Regency Government from 1829 to 1945." To gather information, I looked for sources. The main sources used were documents and pictures from archives. These include:

- a) A decree from the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, found in the Besluit En Bijlagen Archive document dated September 10, 1822, number 7, about building the Banten Resident's Office.
- b) photo of the Regent of Serang, Raden Toemenggoeng Pandji Gondo Koesomo, along with his staff from the Serang Afdeeling (Regency Office) in 1880.
- c) A photo showing the atmosphere during the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday at the Assistant Resident of Serang's residence (Pendopo Regent Serang) in 1920.
- d) A photo of the Lebak Council Members at the Pendopo Serang in 1928.
- e) A photo of a map showing the distribution of settlements and mosques in Serang in 1939, created

by the Topographic Bureau of the Dutch East Indies, Batavia.

- f) A photo of a map showing the development of the colonial city of Serang in 1915, included in the Topographical Inrichting, Batavia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The start of setting up the Serang Regent's office as the main place where the colonial government ran things in Serang Regency from 1829 to 1945.

Geohistory of Serang Regency

Serang Regency is one of eight regions in Banten Province. It is located at the western end of the northern part of Java Island and serves as the main link between Sumatra and Java. It is about 70 kilometers away from Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Serang Regency is one of eight regencies and cities in Banten Province, covering an area of 1,734.28 km². Most people in Serang Regency speak Serang Javanese in their daily communication. Even though the Serang area used to be part of West Java, where people mostly speak Sundanese, the people of Serang have distinct characteristics compared to other Javanese. The Serang Regency Government set the date of the inauguration of Maulana Hasanudin as the first Sultan of Banten as 1 Muhammadiyah 933 H, which is October 8, 1526, the same day as the anniversary of Serang Regency. This decision is mentioned in Regional

Regulation Number 17 of 1985, which was announced on August 6, 1985, and published in the regional gazette starting August 20, 1985. (Tim Arsip dan Perpustakaan Daerah Kabupaten Serang, 2014:6).

Serang Period of the Banten Sultanate (1526-1808)

The history of Serang Regency is closely connected to the time of the Banten Sultanate. Serang played a key role in the development of the region during this time and is where written history of the area began. It remains an important topic for discussion and a long process to understand. The Serang area was the home of the Banten Sultanate and was a busy and important city center from the start of the sultanate up until today.

The Banten Sultanate was at its strongest during the rule of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, whose real name was Sultan Abulfath Abdulfatah. But after reaching its peak, the sultanate started to fall apart. This began when Sultan Abu Nasr Abdul Kohar, known as Sultan Haji, was chosen as the crown prince. This decision led to the sultanate's decline, marked by an agreement signed on April 18, 1684, which ended the sultanate's golden era and progress. The sultan of Banten was treated like a paid worker, which caused many rebellions and troubles during Sultan Haji's time.

During the time when the Sultanate of Serang was in power, the city wasn't very important. Serang was just a small village on the Cibanten River, and the area around it was known for growing a lot of rice throughout the sultanate until the late 1600s. After the Dutch East India Company fell apart, the Dutch East Indies came under the control of Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels, a Dutch man who had fought in the French Revolutionary Army. He got instructions from King Louis Napoleon, who was the leader of the new Dutch Empire. It wasn't until 1808 that Daendels made Banten a prefecture, with Serang as its main city. This made Serang the main place where the prefectural government was based, and also where Dutch officials and European workers in the colonial government lived.

Attack of the Colonial Period and the Relocation of the Center of Government (1808-1828)

Daendels came to Batavia in 1808 with his first job, which was to protect Java from a British attack. So, he created several plans to build defense structures and improve the country's infrastructure. He started by building roads, forts, army camps, ports, military bases, and hospitals. Banten was also affected by these policies. To create a naval base in Ujung Kulon, Daendels asked the Sultan of Banten to send a lot of workers, mostly

forced laborers. But because the land was hard to work on and the job was very tough, many workers got sick and ran away. Through an envoy from the Sultan to Batavia, Daendels told the Sultan to send 1000 workers each day to Ujung Kulon, hand over the prime minister, Mangkubumi Wargadiraja, to Batavia, and move the palace to Anyer because a Dutch fortress called Surosowan would be built there. The Sultan strongly refused because he thought the demands were unfair and against his wishes. As a warning, Commander Philip Pieter sent another envoy to the Surosowan palace to ask again about the Sultan's position. But because the people's anger towards the Dutch was very strong, the envoy was killed right in front of the palace gate. (Halwany, 2011:174).

Daendels responded by attacking the Surosowan Palace on the same day, November 21, 1808. His soldiers destroyed the palace completely. Sultan Aliyyudin II was taken prisoner and sent to Batavia, and Patih Mangkubumi was executed, with his body thrown into the sea. After this, Banten and Lampung were officially made Dutch colonies (Sartono, 1984:148).

This event led to physical resistance against the colonial government. Rebellions led by religious teachers and the local people grew stronger, causing a lot of disorder in the sultanate. After the Surosowan Palace was destroyed, the Dutch East Indies had total

control over the sultanate's government. In 1828, the colonial government moved the capital from the Kaibon Palace to the south, creating the city area of Serang. This was done by clearing land that had once been large rice fields. From then on, Serang started to develop as a European-style colonial city center. It removed the religious culture of the sultanate era and replaced it with the culture brought by the Dutch colonial government.

Establishment of the Serang Regent's Office

According to the Decree of October 25, 1904, the Serang Regent's office was built in 1826 and started being used as the official government office for the Serang area in 1829. This was a year after the government moved its main center from Kaibon to Serang. The reason for this change was because the government center in Kaibon wasn't working well and the offices there weren't enough for the needs of the time. At that time, the government center was in Kaibon, but the Dutch East Indies colonial government thought it was not suitable for their control over the Banten Sultanate, which they had already fully taken over.

According to the Decree from October 25, 1904, the Serang Regent's office was built in 1826 and started being used as the official Regent's office in 1829, which was one year after the government moved its main center from

Kaibon to the Serang area. This change happened because the government center in Kaibon was not working well and the offices there were not enough for the needs of the time. At that time, the main government center was in Kaibon, but it was considered not suitable for the Dutch East Indies colonial government, which had already taken full control of the Banten Sultanate. (Tim Inventarisasi dan Penelusuran Naskah Kuno Banten, 2012:25).



Picture 1. Group photo of Serang Regent Raden Toemenggoeng Pandji Gondo Koesomo with the Serang Afdeeling staff in 1880 (KITLV No. 3634, Banten Provincial Library and Archives Service)

The building of the Resident's office became the reason for starting the Serang Regent's Office. After the Banten Resident's Office was approved, the Dutch East Indies Civil Buildings Director suggested building the Serang Regent's Office again. At that time, the Serang Regency area was still part of the Kaibon government center, and it wasn't enough as a main office for the colonial government in the Serang region. So, a decree was made to set up the Serang

Regent's Office on April 20, 1822, number 6 (Arsip Besluit en bijlagen 20 April no 6). This happened a year after the construction of the Banten Resident's Office.

From its inception, this building was designed as both an office and official residence for the regents of Serang, and it frequently served as the center of colonial government activities. Its rectangular layout features a massive, high foundation. Steps add a touch of luxury to the front porch.



Picture 2. Photo of Lebak Council Members at the Serang Hall in 1928 (Banten Archives, Banten Provincial Library Service)

At that time, this building was the most luxurious one built by the Dutch Colonial government, located right in the middle of the city, next to the Banten Resident's office. This building showed the government's power and glory back then, as it had officially taken over from the Banten Sultanate government. It changed the religious and cultural practices of the community to fit a more modern European style. In the 1900s, the Regent's office building was renovated again, making it

look even more impressive. The original 10 Tuscan-style pillars were now 32, with white paint covering the big front yard. The doors leading into the pendopo were made larger, with big windows that almost covered the whole building. The wooden roof was replaced with a white ceiling, and there was a big crystal lamp in the center. The building became more decorated, standing proudly in the city center as a symbol of European style.



Picture 3. Photo of the Serang Regent's Office
(Banten Province DPK)

In 2003, the Serang Regency Government renovated the building. They replaced the large roof and covered some walls with marble. They also expanded the interior to better suit government needs. The front porch has a pavilion supported by 32 round Tuscan-style pillars that have striped patterns carved into them, making the building look more impressive. The original pyramid-shaped roof, made of wood, was replaced with a white ceiling made of permanent cement. The brown ceramic tiles were changed to glazed tiles. The wider roof helps prevent

rainwater from getting on the walls. This roof shape is inspired by traditional Javanese architecture. The large windows and doors have been redesigned, and the doors now have carved wooden details.

The role of the Serang Regent's office as the center of colonial government in Serang Regency in 1829-1945

Dutch Colonial Period (1829-1942)

During the Dutch colonial time, the Serang Regent's Office was mainly focused on carrying out government tasks based on the rules and policies set by the current regent. This period began during the time of Raden Toemenggoeng Pandji Gondokoesoemo, who was the regent of Serang. Two significant events happened during his leadership: the big eruption of Mount Krakatoa on August 23, 1883, and a people's uprising in Cilegon in 1888. As the regent, Pandji was key in putting down the resistance. The first event was the massive eruption of Mount Krakatoa, which damaged the Anyer Lighthouse.

This lighthouse was important because it marked the zero kilometer point for Governor General Deandels when he started building the 1,000 km "postweg" from Anyer to Panarukan. The eruption caused huge waves that reached up to 30 meters high, hitting the west coast of Banten. This destroyed several areas including Anyer, Merak, Caringin, Sirih, Pasauran, Tajur, and Carita. Around 21,500 people died in these areas,

according to the Serang Regency Regional Archives and Library (2014:58). Many coastal communities moved to urban areas to stay safe from the tsunami. The Serang Regency government brought everyone together to evacuate to Serang Square. At that time, the Serang Pendopo Office became a place where health and disaster information was shared because there were no health facilities available then.

The Serang Regent's Office is often used for community events, especially religious ones like the Hajj and Islamic holidays. In Serang, people who have done the Hajj are respected more than others. Those planning to go on the Hajj usually meet at the Regent's Office first to register and leave together. This tradition of traveling for the Hajj as a group still continues today, with people gathering at the Regent's Office. Besides Hajj departures, the Regent's Office also hosts other community events, such as traditional thanksgiving ceremonies. Religious traditions are very important to the people of Banten, especially in Serang, and are a big part of their lives, including celebrations to mark the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW. This illustrates that the Serang Regent's Office is not only a center of governmental administration, but also a symbol of togetherness, unity, and cultural identity for the people of Banten, who highly value religious practices and ancestral traditions.



Picture 4. Photograph of the Commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday at the Serang Regent's Hall in 1920 (BTN HRT 53, Banten Province DPK)

In cultural matters, Regent Achmad Djajadiningrat also met with traditional leaders from the Baduy community to show respect for their traditions and culture. He also gave the community a chance to interact with people from outside the Baduy area and to build better relationships with the government.



Picture 5. Photo of Baduy traditional elders with Regent Achmad Djajadiningrat, during the "Seba" gathering of the Baduy community in 1900. (Source: Banten Province DPK)

This tradition is based on Achmad Djajadiningrat's open mindset about the culture of Banten and how it should be

acknowledged and protected by the Baduy tribe. Because of this, the Baduy people give tribute or offer their agricultural products to the government once a year, a practice known as "Seba Baduy." This tradition shows their gratitude for a good harvest and also builds a connection with the local government. The Baduy people travel long distances from the interior of Lebak to the government center in Serang on foot. The government welcomes them with happy ceremonies. The Dutch East Indies government used a centralized system along with a deconcentration system. This setup aimed to make the government work more efficiently and consistently, avoid problems or resistance in distant areas, and also consider the needs of different regions..



Picture 6. Group photo of invited guests at the inauguration of the Regent of Serang in 1924.
(KITLV, DPK Banten Province)

Japanese rule (1942-1945)

On March 3, 1942, Japanese soldiers came into the area through Tarahan Island, which is near Bojonegara. They took control of the Regent that was previously ruled by the Dutch. At the same time, RAA

Hilman Djajadiningrat became the regent of Serang (Serang Regency Archives and Library, 2014:83). When the Japanese arrived in Serang, they managed to weaken the Dutch East Indies forces. They even hid in the mountains and along the rivers. This shows how strong the Japanese military was at that time, allowing them to move into Serang without facing any serious opposition.

This had a big effect on people's lives, as they were forced to rely on Japan for their basic needs during the war. Farmers couldn't make money anymore because all their crops had to go to the government. People not only faced physical hardship but also emotional pain because some Japanese soldiers treated religion and traditions with disrespect. They ignored local customs and religious practices, like stopping Friday prayers and other important holidays. Celebrations such as the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, which used to take place at government buildings, were no longer allowed. Places like the Banten Resident's Office and the Serang Regent's Office, which used to be centers for community events, were only used for military operations. This made people very angry and started them to resist the Japanese government.

Thus came the end of Japanese rule in Indonesia, beginning with the dropping of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, followed by a second

atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. This resulted in the Japanese government's surrender to the Allies on August 14, 1945. News of the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence quickly spread throughout West Java. Due to communication difficulties, the news was received in a chain reaction.

After the Japanese occupation ended, the Banten government began to undergo comprehensive restructuring. Officials were appointed from the indigenous population, and the government structure was reorganized. Japanese-language names for government offices were removed and replaced with those from the Dutch colonial era. Government functions resumed as usual, with the Resident's Office becoming the office and official residence of the Governor of Banten under the auspices of West Java Province. The Serang Regent's Office became the regional government office of Serang Regency. Government activities returned to normal, as they had been during the Dutch East Indies era, and community activities and religious traditions began to return to their normal routines at the Serang Regent's Office. It encompasses religious, cultural, and educational traditions. To date, the role and function of the Serang Regent's Office have remained unchanged and continue to serve as the center of activities and governance for the Serang Regency government.

CONCLUSION

The arrival of foreigners in Banten started a long history where Banten and Serang became important places for colonial rule. After the Surosowan Palace was destroyed, the Sultanate's government was fully controlled by the Dutch East Indies. In 1828, the Dutch East Indies government moved the main government building from the Kaibon Palace to the south, creating the city area of Serang.

The Serang Regent's office is at Jalan Veteran No. 1, Kotabaru, Serang District, Serang City, Banten Province. According to a decree from October 25, 1904, the office was built in 1826 and started being used as the Serang Regent's office in 1829, a year after the government moved from Kaibon to Serang. This happened because the Kaibon government center was not working well and the government offices were not enough. During the Dutch colonial time, the Serang Regent's office was the main government center and also a place where people came together for different activities like religion, social life, and culture. During the time when Japan occupied the area, the Serang Regent's Office saw a big change in its role and responsibilities. At this time, the term "Regency" was no longer used, and the office was renamed to "Ken," which was controlled by Kenco. The structure of the regional government was moved to the Serang Regent's Office because the Banten

Resident's office had officially become the Japanese Military Commander's Office and the main headquarters for the Japanese army. So, during the Japanese military rule, the Serang Regent's Office was mainly used for government work and to support the Japanese military's war efforts. Any local activities that used to happen at the Serang Regent's Office were stopped and even banned. After Japan left and Indonesia became independent, the Serang Regent's Office officially became the main center of the Serang level I regional government, also known as Serang Regency.

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