



## ENEDINA ALVES MARQUES: FIRST BLACK ENGINEER IN BRAZIL

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**Abstract:** Enedina Alves Marques was born on January 13, 1913. She was the only girl among 10 brothers. Daughter of a maid, she was raised in the family home for whom her mother worked. In 1927, she started studying at the *Escola Normal* where she attended until 1931, graduating from the Normal course (Formation Course for Primary teachers). She was the first woman and the first black woman to graduate in Civil Engineering in Brazil, challenging academic and social standards.

**Keywords:** Enedina; civil engineering; exact subjects.

### ENEDINA ALVES MARQUES: PRIMEIRA ENGENHEIRA NEGRA DO BRASIL

**Resumo:** Enedina Alves Marques nasceu no dia 13 de janeiro de 1913. Única menina entre os 10 irmãos. Filha de doméstica, foi criada na casa da família para quem sua mãe trabalhava. Em 1927, começou a estudar na *Escola Normal* onde frequentou até 1931, formando-se no curso Normal. Foi a primeira mulher e a primeira negra a se diplomar em Engenharia Civil do Brasil, desafiou os padrões acadêmicos e sociais.

**Palavras-Chave:** Enedina; engenharia civil; exatas.

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**Palabras-clave:** Enedina; Ingeniería Civil; Ciencias Exactas.

### **ENEDINA ALVES MARQUES: PREMIÈRE INGÉNIEURE EN GÉNIE CIVIL NOIRE DU BRÉSIL**

**Résumé:** Enedina Alves Marque est née le 13 janvier 1913. La seule fille parmi les 10 frères. Fille d'une femme de ménage, elle a été élevée chez les employeurs de sa mère. En 1927, elle a commencé à étudier dans l'*École Normale* où elle a fréquenté jusqu'à 1931, en finissant le cours Normale. Elle a été la première femme noire à avoir un diplôme en Génie Civile au Brésil, défiant les normes académiques et sociales.

**Mots-clés:** Enedina, Génie Civil, Exactes

### **INTRODUCTION**

Enedina Alves Marques was born on January 13, 1913 and died in 1981 at the age of 68. Only girl among the 10 children of Paulo Marques and Virgília Alves de Marques, a black couple who arrives in Curitiba in search of better living conditions, resulting from the rural exodus that occurred after the abolition. Daughter of a maid, she was raised in the family home of the police chief and black major, Domingos Nascimento Sobrinho, for whom his mother (also called Dona Duca) worked.

Enedina was the same age as Domingos' daughter and so that she could keep each other's company, he registers them in the same schools and, thus, Enedina was literate at the Private School of Professor Luiza Dorfmond, between 1925 and 1926. In 1927, she began studying at the *Escola Normal* where she attended until 1931, graduating from the Normal course. Enedina ran for the post of normalist teacher after being certified in 1932 by the Instituto Paranaense in Magisterium and was approved. And, on July 16, 1932, she was admitted by the Secretary of Education and Public Health of the State of Paraná to teach. Between 1932 and 1935 she collaborated as a teacher in several public schools in the municipalities of São Matheus do Sul, Cerro Azul, Rio Negro, Escola Isolada de Passaúna in Campo Largo and in Curitiba at the *Escola da Linha do Tiro do Juvevê*. She would have been part of a resistance network of the black community of Paraná, Pre-Black Power.



Between 1935 and 1937 she returned to the capital to study at the Novo Ateu, the Madureza - Intermediate course, which was required at the time for teaching, equivalent today to a junior high school. During that same period, she moved in with the family of builder Mathias Caron, in Juvevê. When taking up residence with the Caron family, Enedina rented a house in front of Colégio Nossa Senhora Menina, still in Juvevê, where she started to teach and set up serial literacy classes. In this school, she taught private lessons to children who did not access the public school. After that, she gained classes to teach at the Escola de Linha de Tiro.

Enedina Alves Marques was the first woman and the first black woman to graduate in civil engineering in the southern region of Brazil, in 1945. Her graduation ceremony was marked, essentially, as an achievement of great curiosity for Curitiba society, due to the fact that she succeeded in transposing a hegemonically masculine and white space. At 32, Curitiba citizen Enedina graduated in engineering alongside the 32 men, at a ceremony that took place in the Palácio Avenida building, at Rua XV de Novembro, on the corner of Rua Oliveira Belo. In 1947, she started working at the Secretaria of Traffic and Public Works (SVOP) as an assistant engineer, where she was assigned to the State Department of Water and Electricity. She was the first female engineer to head the Engineering Division of the State Statistics Section. When carrying out the survey of several rivers in the state, she became the Inspector of the Works of the Cotia Power Plant where she developed research on the topographic survey of the waterway between the Saci and Cotia rivers.

In 1951, Enedina was reclassified by a tender as an Engineer at SVOP and began to gain prominence and recognition on the national scene, when designing the Cachoeira Capivari Hydroelectric Plant. In parallel with the hydroelectric project, Engineer Enedina Alves carried out research in the typography field of this plant, which was later called Usina Parigot de Souza. The engineer actively participated in the design and construction of school groups. She faced prejudices of gender and race and, during the works at the Plant, she was known for being energetic and strict, always imposing herself - besides being a woman, she was black and worked in an environment mostly occupied by men. In 1961, sociologist Octávio Ianni, interviewed Enedina as part of his research “Metamorphoses of the slave”, funded by Unesco.



In 1962, when she completed 29 years of public service, she retired from the state government and received recognition from Governor Ney Braga, who by decree admitted Enedina's achievements as an engineer and guaranteed her earnings equivalent to a judge's salary. In the year 2000, she was immortalized alongside 53 other pioneering women in Brazil, by the Memorial à Mulher, located at Praça do Soroptismo in Curitiba, in the Hugo Lange neighbourhood. In 2006, the Enedina Alves Marques Institute of Black Women is founded in Maringá. Brilliantly, Enedina Alves Marques, Brazil's first black Civil Engineer, challenged academic and social standards (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Enedina Alves Marques.



Source: Investiga Menina!, 2019.

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