







## Yvonne Lara: Brazilian nurse

Yvonne Lara: *enfermeira brasileira*

Yvonne Lara: *enfermera brasileña*

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** to present the trajectory of Yvonne da Silva Lara in Brazilian nursing. **Method:** historical method based on documents from the perspective of microanalysis with an emphasis on biography. Data collected from personal and institutional documents were triangulated with the adherence literature and organized into axes: personal data, nursing education process and professional trajectory. **Results:** the analysis of these data clarified the divergence in the biographed woman's year of birth and revealed her as a trained nurse with specialization, with a diversity of knowledge and significant practical experience. **Conclusion:** the legacy she left was having articulated her knowledge and ideals in favor of the ethos of caring for human beings. **Descriptors:** Nursing; History of Nursing; Nurses; Biography.

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** apresentar a trajetória de Yvonne da Silva Lara na enfermagem brasileira. **Método:** método histórico com base documental na perspectiva da microanálise com ênfase em biografia. Os dados coletados dos documentos pessoais e institucionais foram triangulados com a literatura de aderência e organizados nos eixos: dados pessoais, processo de formação na enfermagem e trajetória profissional. **Resultados:** a análise desses dados esclareceu a divergência no ano de nascimento da biografada e a revelou como enfermeira de formação com especialização, diversidade de conhecimentos e significativa vivência prática. **Conclusão:** o legado deixado foi ter articulado seus saberes e ideais em prol do *ethos* do cuidado ao ser humano. **Descritores:** Enfermagem; História da Enfermagem; Enfermeiras e Enfermeiros; Biografia.

### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** presentar la trayectoria de Yvonne da Silva Lara en la enfermería brasileña. Método: método histórico basado en documentos desde la perspectiva del microanálisis con énfasis en la biografía. Los datos recolectados de los documentos personales e institucionales fueron triangulados con la literatura de adherencia y organizados en los ejes: datos personales, proceso de formación de enfermería y trayectoria profesional. **Resultados:** el análisis de estos datos aclaró la divergencia en el año de nacimiento de la biografiada y la reveló como siendo una enfermera de formación con especialización, con diversidad de saberes y significativa experiencia práctica. **Conclusión:** el legado que dejó fue haber articulado sus saberes e ideales a favor del *ethos* del cuidado del ser humano. **Descriptor:** Enfermería; Historia de la Enfermería; Enfermera y Enfermeros; Biografía.

## INTRODUCTION

Yvonne Lara stood out in the artistic field as a singer and composer. Popularly known as Dona Yvonne Lara, she was considered the Queen/Lady of Samba<sup>1</sup> for being the first woman to have a *samba-enredo* signed and to be part of the composers wing at the *Grêmio Recreativo Escola de Samba Império Serrano*<sup>2-4</sup>.

Yvonne Lara was born on April 13, 1922, and died on April 16, 2018. Daughter of Emerentina Bento da Silva and João da Silva Lara, she inherited her interest in music from her parents. Her father played the seven-string guitar, and paraded in the *Bloco dos Africanos*; her mother was a seamstress and singer with a soprano voice, and performed in the *Flor do Abacate* and *Ameno Resedá* ranch parades during the carnival period in Rio de Janeiro<sup>5</sup>.

Her father died when she was less than three years old, and then her mother<sup>2</sup> when she was 12. She was raised by her uncles, with whom she learned to play the *cavaquinho* (small guitar). Samba was already in the family lineage and Yvonne continued this tradition by joining as a singing student with Lucília Guimarães Villa-lobos - pianist, trained at the National Institute of Music.

Then in December 1947, she married Oscar Costa. Son of Alfredo Costa - president of the Prazer da Serrinha Samba School, with whom she had two children: Alfredo and Odir. The couple remained together for 28 years, until the death of her husband<sup>6</sup>. Over a life trajectory of 96 years, she established herself as a representative woman in the music space.

We cartographically identified around 17 productions by Yvonne in the discography and two participations in filmography, including participation in the *Sítio do Pica-Pau Amarelo*. In addition, several electronic sites and repositories in interviews show her presence in concerts alongside nationally and internationally recognized actors and singers in the field of culture and arts.

Dona Yvonne Lara was a character in the field of arts. Despite the few lines drawn from her major work, as highlighted by historian Maria Lucia Mott<sup>7</sup>, she is “greatly celebrated, but little known”, in our case, by Brazilian nursing.

The study strengthens and integrates the celebrations of Yvonne Lara’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday (2021/2022), if she was still alive. It also contributes to the analysis of institutional documents regarding her training, especially in Nursing, as well as expands the result of the analytical photographic essays as knowledge production, previously presented in published works only as illustrative images and/or for use as a memory trigger.

Thus, due to her representativeness in the fields of art, culture and health, we established the objective in this study of presenting her trajectory in Brazilian nursing.

## METHOD

This is a historical study based on biographical document analysis<sup>8</sup>, from the perspective of microanalysis<sup>9</sup>. The historical sources were written and image, personal and professional documents made available on electronic sites, social networks and intellectual productions, such as articles, dissertations, and theses, etc. The inclusion criterion included an analysis of documents that concern Yvonne Lara’s life, specifically in the process of collegiate training and in nursing, and we excluded those with a trajectory direction to other knowledge, art and culture spaces.

The time frames covered the period from 1940 to 1977, considering Yvonne Lara’s entry as a nursing student in 1940 and her retirement from the professional field of nursing in 1977. The instrument was applied with the data in the search for documentary sources: date, type of document and synthesis for articulations to the context. Scanned copies were made for the written documents to transcribe or reproduce them as documentary evidence and for the photos we applied a photographic matrix<sup>10</sup>. The data triangulated in the discussion originated the final considerations.

We emphasize that the investigation followed the recommendations of the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) guide, as validated<sup>11</sup>, despite the gaps in terms of applicability for historical documental approaches that are not based on interviews or derived from this data collection technique.

The study complied with the ethical and legal principles established in the Copyright Law no. 9.610/1986 and the resolutions of the National Health Council, as well as those recommended by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Guidelines and Regulatory Norms for Research Involving Human Beings in Human and Social Sciences, of the Health Council focused on the area of Human Sciences.

As it has a documentary source from public archives, as well as open access articles and literature, the present study did not require the appreciation and approval of the Research Ethics Committee.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A table with the synthesis of personal data, the nursing training process and the professional trajectory of Yvonne Lara in nursing is presented below (Figures 1 and 2).

YEAR	FACTS/ EVENTS	SYNTHESIS
<b>YVONNE DA SILVA LARA</b>		
<b>PERSONAL DATA</b>		
1921	Birth	Name: Yvonne da Silva Lara.
1922		Born April 13, 1921/1922. Sources are uncertain about the year.
1932	Orsina da Fonseca Municipal school	In 1932, she studied at the Orsina da Fonseca Municipal School, aged 10/11.
1947	Marriage	She married Oscar Costa in 1947, legally adopting the name Yvonne Lara da Costa.
2018	Death	She died on April 16, 2018.
1946	Hired by the Engenho de Dentro	
1947	Institute of Psychiatry	
1970	Participation in the Psychiatric Reform in Brazil	
1977	Retirement	

FIGURE 1: Personal data regarding Yvonne Lara (1921-1977). Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2022.

YEAR	FACTS/ EVENTS	SYNTHESIS
<b>YVONNE DA SILVA LARA</b>		
<b>NURSING TRAINING PROCESS</b>		
1940	Alfredo Pinto School of Nurses	She joined the Alfredo Pinto School of Nurses at the age of 16/17 (1940), currently called the Alfredo Pinto Nursing School.
1941	Graduation	
1942	Specialist in Social Visiting Nursing	She specialized in Social Visiting in 1942.
<b>PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORY IN NURSING</b>		
1941	Public entrance exam / selection process	At the age of 19, she took a public tender for the Ministry of Health, and at the age of 25/26 she was hired by the Engenho de Dentro Institute of Psychiatry.
1942		
1946	Hired by the Engenho de Dentro Institute of Psychiatry	She worked at Colônia Juliano Moreira for more than three decades with people in psychological distress.
1947		
1970	Participation in the Psychiatric Reform in Brazil	She acted in the psychiatric reform in Brazil from the 1970s onwards. She retired after 30 years of work and began to dedicate herself exclusively to her artistic life.
1977	Retirement	

**FIGURE 2:** Nursing training process and professional trajectory regarding Yvonne Lara (1921-1977). Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2022.

### Personal data

We identified discrepancies in the documentary consultation regarding the year of birth of Yvonne da Silva Lara. The biographer<sup>5</sup> reports that she would have officially been born in 1921, and not in 1922. Such nonconformity would have occurred due to a change made by her mother in the identity document so that Yvonne could enter the Orsina da Fonseca Municipal School (1932), for which a minimum age of 11 years was required for student admission at the time.

In an investigation carried out in the field of occupational therapy<sup>12</sup>, the researchers obtained information from the biographer's grandson, André Lara, that this divergence involving the year of birth even generated a double commemoration for the centenary of Yvonne Lara: in 2021 and in 2022. The date of birth mentioned in her identity card is 1922, but the year 1921 is registered in her School Transcript at the Alfredo Pinto School of Nurses<sup>13,14</sup>.

Yvonne da Silva Lara (her birth name) was born in Rio de Janeiro at home with the help of a midwife. The first daughter of Emerentina Bento da Silva and José da Silva Lara, she lived with her father for a short time until she was three years old, and lost her mother early, when she was 12 years old<sup>15</sup>. These facts motivated her entry into a boarding school, which she left at the age of 17 after her maternal uncle Dionísio Bento da Silva decided that it would be better for her to live with her family, penalized by the early departure of her parents<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, Yvonne began to study at the institution currently called *Escola Orsina da Fonseca*, created by decree in 1897 and inaugurated on October 28 of the following year, under the name of *Instituto Profissional Feminino* (Figure 3).

In 1914, through Decree No. 981, of September 2, 1914, the institution began to offer education aimed at vocational training in male and female schools and schools for both sexes, at night. In the same year, on December 28, in honor of the wife of Mr. President of the Republic Marechal Hermes Rodrigues da Fonseca (1911-1914), the institution was named *Instituto Profissional Feminino Orsina da Fonseca*<sup>17</sup>.



**FIGURE 3:** Image of Yvonne Lara at the Orsina da Fonseca Municipal School<sup>18</sup>. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2022.

Figure 2 shows Yvonne Lara in the central position accompanied by seven students, all in uniform, from the Orsina da Fonseca Municipal School, currently the *Instituto Profissional Feminino Orsina da Fonseca* (1930-1945). The attributes of landscapes in the imagery text refer to a natural and external setting; half a wall built with decorative railings, possibly from the institution, and further down seeing part of the building. Personal attributes are light colored blouses, with short and long sleeves, dark colored skirts and shoes. It is important to highlight the alignment of the length of the skirts, all the same. This corroborates with findings from other studies on fashion in the field of nursing, which highlight the uniform aesthetics and pattern<sup>19,20</sup>.

Yvonne's entry into nursing occurred unexpectedly. When she went to live with her uncles, she was advised by them to start working, because otherwise they would be responsible for employing her in the fabric factory where her cousins worked. As she didn't want to work in the factory, she went in search of other opportunities. At the time, she became aware of the opening of a selection process for the Alfredo Pinto Professional School of Nurses through an advertisement in the *Jornal do Brasil*, for which she decided to apply<sup>15</sup>.

### Nursing training process

Yvonne Lara entered the selection process with the following wording:

*"Yvone Silva Lara, Daughter of João da Silva Lara and Emerintina da Silva, address at Rua (...), 19-year-old Brazilian, requests Your Excellency to have her included on the list of candidates for the admission exam. She asks for approval in these terms. Rio de Janeiro, March 9, 1940. Signed Yvone da Silva Lara"*<sup>21</sup>. [the writing of the name of the biographer according to the documentary record consulted]

She was approved among the top ten places in the selection process, including the right to a scholarship in the amount of R\$60,000 (sixty-thousand Reals). This value at the time corresponded to approximately 40 copies of the *Revista da Semana* (1940) weekly magazine in the amount of R\$1,500 (one thousand five hundred Reals). Thus, she was able to maintain her expenses for her education, as well as financially help with expenses at her uncles' house<sup>15</sup>.

The Professional School of Nurses was created in 1890 and divided into three sections – female, male and mixed, in 1921. Yvonne Lara joined the section for women, called the Alfredo Pinto Professional School of Nurses<sup>22</sup>.

After completing the Nursing Course in 1941 (Figure 4), she was introduced to different disciplines offered, and specifically one, the discipline Notions of Social Medicine and Medical-Social Assistance Services, aroused her interest in a specialization<sup>15</sup>.



FIGURE 4: Nursing diploma, 1941<sup>23</sup>. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2022.

Thus, in 1942, she entered the Social Visitor Course at the educational institution with a request to continue her studies, with the following wording:

*Yvonne da Silva Lara, certified nurse from the “Alfredo Pinto” School of Nurses, hereby requests Your Excellency the special favor of admitting her to the Visiting Course of this establishment. She asks for approval in these terms. Rio de Janeiro, March 14, 1942. Signed Yvonne da Silva Lara<sup>24</sup>.*

The response to the application was positive, with registration for sufficiency proof on March 30, 1942. Approved, she enrolled on April 11, 1942 and her enrollment was confirmed<sup>25</sup> on April 17.

She then completed the Social Visiting Nurses Course, created by Decree No. 17,805, of May 23, 1927<sup>26</sup>, from the Alfredo Pinto Professional School of Nurses (*Escola Profissional de Enfermeiros Alfredo Pinto - EPEAP*). Such a course was exclusively for women with a nursing degree, and those who presented the best instruction, education and psychological conditions, as well as moral and social conduct were chosen<sup>27</sup>.

This course was a form of “specialization” aimed at “providing care to psychopaths” and lasted one academic year, with specific subjects in charge of the psychiatrists of the Care to Psychopaths. Over the 15 years of operation, 102 nurses were titled as Social Visitors<sup>17</sup>, with Yvonne Lara being one of them.

### Professional trajectory in nursing

A researcher who had access to letters about Yvonne’s trajectory states that she knew how to associate music with her skills as a nurse to help patients in coping with mental disorders<sup>16</sup>. The music worked as a consoling balm at the countless parties she promoted in her work environment, where she sang and danced along with the patients. These moments transformed the routine, sometimes tiring, into encounters of joy and happiness.

However, despite these significant records that tell us a lot about the personality of the subject, we identified limited (re)knowledge about her trajectory in academia. Although she received great visibility in her artistic career and in her work as a social worker, specifically in her journey as a nursing student, we observed little prominence.

Her professional life as a nurse was supported by the Pedro II Psychiatric Institute, in the Engenho de Dentro neighborhood - a suburb of Rio de Janeiro, where the Nise da Silveira Institute was located. This data led to an imagistic record of Yvonne in action as a nurse in the institution (Figure 5).



**FIGURE 5:** Yvonne Lara working at the Nise da Silveira Institute. Artist’s family collection, s/d<sup>28</sup>.

Centered in the image in Figure 5, we have the nurse and social worker Yvonne Lara. It is an image with approximately 11 people sitting on chairs and on the floor, in dance gestures, possibly during a samba or something similar. Yvonne is wearing a blouse buttoned in front with short sleeves, long pants in light tones and closed shoes in dark color.

According to an article about culture<sup>28</sup>, the event was a tribute to her by the doctors of the current Nise da Silveira Institute, in Engenho de Dentro. Although it is not possible to identify the temporality of the image, we observe the writing on the blackboard, as a landscape attribute, the writing “*Merry Chri... a prospe...*”, which leads us to infer that the fraternization took place during Christmas.

It should be noted that during her work at the Engenho de Dentro Psychiatric Institute, now the Nise da Silveira Institute, Yvonne Lara treated inpatients and outpatients, including those from other municipalities. They were part of the humanized routine focused on holistic care, which had therapeutic workshops as a strategy. One of these workshops even gave rise years later to the *Loucura Suburbana* carnival block, which warns of the need to give visibility to the anti-asylum struggle<sup>1,29</sup>.

In addition to studying nursing and specialization at the Social Visiting Nurse Course at the Alfredo Pinto Professional School of Nurses (female section of the Professional School of Nurses and Nurses), Yvonne Lara also graduated from the social worker course as an institution in the complementary unit at University of Brazil, current Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, through the Anna Nery School of Nursing. Her training in this area was the subject of research by Graziela Scheffer in the article entitled “Social Service and Dona Ivone Lara: The dark and secular side of our professional history”. However, we emphasize that the author presents readers with some wrong information about Yvonne Lara’s trajectory in nursing, such as: her training at the Anna Nery Nursing School, which did not happen as a nurse<sup>30</sup>.

This can be proven by analyzing the documentation sent by Yvonne to the current Alfredo Pinto Nursing School to apply for retirement. In the request, she attached documents referring to her trajectory as a scholarship holder in the 1940s, signed by the director at the time, nurse Lydia das Dôres Matta – graduated from the Nursing School of São Paulo<sup>31</sup>.

In articulating nursing with social work, she worked in the anti-asylum struggle in psychiatry reform in Brazil, in partnership with Nise da Silveira for more than 30 years until she dedicated herself exclusively to artistic life<sup>1</sup>. Her retirement as a nurse occurred in the 1970s.

Years later, during the management of Nurse Pedro de Jesus (2005-2008 and 2008-2011) at the Union of Nurses in Rio de Janeiro, Yvonne Lara da Costa – married name – received the card no. 01 as Meritorious Member of the institution, on June 8, 2011. The award ceremony took place at the premises of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro<sup>32</sup>.

### Study limitations

A person’s biography is composed of several layers and selecting one of them is not an easy task, especially when they intertwine in excerpts and clippings, leaving gaps. However, this is one of the risks and challenges that the researcher assumes. We located much data from the biography in this investigation, from her artistic performance, her work in Social Work and/or as an Occupational Therapist, but we chose to specifically emphasize her trajectory in Nursing, without however disregarding some relevant aspects in other knowledge areas and artistic-cultural crafts in the understanding that these sometimes articulate and influence each other.

In addition, it draws attention to the crossing of sources with other studies, which shows that investigations leave gaps and scrutinizing is relevant, which advances knowledge construction in the field of history, as well as the historiographical debate. This corroborates the assertion of another investigation about the biography<sup>33</sup> in the sense that other documents can produce other versions and interpretations.

### CONCLUSION

By presenting the trajectory of Yvonne da Silva Lara in Brazilian nursing, we had the opportunity to scrutinize her trajectory much talked about by some, but little known in the format of research scientifically based on articulated documentation.

Formed by the former female section of the Professional School of Nurses, called the Alfredo Pinto Professional School of Nurses, located in the Engenho de Dentro neighborhood, she played an important role in Nursing, having worked and struggled alongside Nise da Silveira during the anti-asylum movement. One of her legacies was being able to use her diversity of knowledge, and most importantly, her practical experience in favor of the ethos of caring for human beings.

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