

## TAMING A COTTONTAIL

by Agnes Dobryoden, age 15,  
 Inford, Manitoba—Prize Winner

**Note:** We have combined two letters which Agnes wrote regarding her tame Cottontail Rabbit. Her first letter suggested that she had made some interesting observations so we asked her for further details. Agnes tells us that they have seen Cottontail Rabbits only recently in the Sand district. This and similar reports indicate that this animal is being found in new locations everywhere and is apparently moving northward. We will be interested in hearing if any of you have seen this rabbit in your locality especially if it was first seen there only recently. You will notice by the photo that it has comparatively short ears and is brown all the year. These are two distinguishing features which should make it easy to recognize. The Cottontail Rabbit, is, as a rule, a difficult animal to tame but Agnes seems to have been quite successful in doing so. Agnes' letter is as follows:

"With this letter I am enclosing a photo of "Peter" the rabbit, eating a carrot out of the hand. Carrots were not his only food. He also enjoyed eating bread and toast. He would eat anything remaining in the dog's pan which would vary from porridge to soup. Some mornings we would be delayed with his treats, and soon would see Peter peeking through the window to see what was keeping us. That would be in winter when the snow would reach the hills. When we would go out and call Peter, he would come, no matter where or how far away he might have been. Strangely enough, our dog would go chasing jack rabbits over the fields all day, but would never touch Peter. Often one would see the two together. When Peter would be eating out of the dog's plate, the dog would wait until Peter had had his fill.

"We have noticed Cottontail Rabbits in our district only recently, perhaps in the last three years. These rabbits became fairly common and usually stay near farm buildings. In our yard we saw one adult and six or seven younger ones. Peter was easy to identify when he would come to us because he had a notch in one ear. There were about four other rabbits who would come up to eat after they would see Peter the rabbit come.

"This is how we tamed Peter. As a young rabbit we used to see him now and then about the farm buildings. Whenever we saw him, we would put out some small treats—for example, wheat, meanwhile speaking softly to him and then quietly we would retreat. When we would be off a considerable distance we noticed Peter would approach the grain and eat. Gradually he became accustomed to our presence and became tamer. Soon we were noticing him near the house. We continued offering him treats and always would always speak softly to him. Soon he became so familiar to us that he would come running to us. Then we tried offering treats from our hand. In a short time he was eating from the hand. One thing we noticed was the fact that once Peter was tamed, the other rabbits seemed to notice no harm was meant and tamed easily. We never picked the rabbits up but when we were feeding them we would pet their fur which was unbelievably soft. Even though the rabbits would eat the odd carrot greens, lettuce, dill, celery, peas and weeds, they didn't do any noticeable damage to the garden."



Photo sent in by Agnes Dobryoden