

## Thomas Jefferson

February gets all the glory with both Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays, but April belongs to Thomas Jefferson. He wasn't the *Father of America*, and he didn't guide the country through its greatest crisis, but in many ways he gave form to the United States as we know it today.

He wrote the Declaration of Independence and urged the abolishment of the nobility. He argued for more religious freedom. His educational program called for a public school system, public libraries, and more liberal universities (*OK, so he's not one of Rush Limbaugh's favorite people!*). He also drafted the decimal system of coinage based on the dollar, called for a strong central government, and helped plan Washington, D.C. He was also the first president inaugurated in the nation's new capital.

He served as representative to the Continental Congress, Governor of Virginia, Minister to France, Secretary of State, and the third President of the United States. Not a bad career, all in all, but wait, that's not it. He was a scientist, archaeologist, inventor, and philosopher. He invented the swivel chair and the dumb waiter, and he conducted the very first archaeological dig in the U.S. He founded the University of Virginia and stands today as the nation's first great Democrat.

Not surprisingly, then, covers of Jefferson abound. Banks are named after him, towns are named after him, sets are incomplete without him. Perhaps someday he'll be included in President's Day, like those other guys, but he'll always have a place in the albums and displays of matchcover collectors. Some collectors even devote a special album to him...not an entirely bad idea. Have you thought about a *Presidents* collection? It's worth looking into.

