Why 'Davy Jones'?

Davy Jones' Locker is a metaphor for the bottom of the sea: the state of death among drowned sailors and shipwrecks. It is used as a euphemism for drowning or shipwrecks in which the sailors' and ships' remains are consigned to the depths of the ocean (to be *sent to Davy Jones' Locker*).
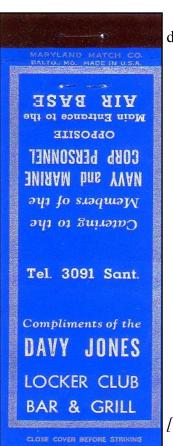
The earliest known reference of the negative connotation of Davy Jones occurs in the *Four Years Voyages of Capt. George Roberts*, by Daniel Defoe, published in 1726 in London.

An early description of Davy Jones occurs in Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, published in 1751:

> "This same Davy Jones, according to sailors, is the fiend that presides over all the evil spirits of the deep, and is often seen in various shapes, *perching among the rigging on the eve of hurricanes*:, ship-wrecks, and other disasters to which sea-faring life is exposed, warning the devoted wretch of death and woe."

In the story, Jones is described as having saucer eyes, three rows of teeth, horns, a tail, and blue smoke coming from his nostrils.

The origin of the tale of Davy Jones is unclear, and many conjectural or folkloric explanations have been told: The Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue' by Francis Gros, published in 1811, includes the definitions: "DAVID JONES. The devil, the spirit of the sea: called Necken in the north countries, such as Norway, Denmark, and Sweden" and "DAVID JONES' LOCKER. The sea".

The 1898 *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* connects Davy to the West Indian *duppy* (*duffy*) and Jones to biblical Jonah:

> "*He's gone to Jones' locker*, i.e. he is dead. Jones is a corruption of Jonah, the prophet, who was thrown into the sea. *Locker*, in seaman's phrase, means any receptacle for private stores; and *duffy* is a ghost or spirit among the West Indian negroes. So the whole phrase is, "He is gone to the place of safe keeping, where duffy Jonah was sent to."

Another source says:

> "Davy Jones was the supernatural ruler of the Seven Seas as the condemned captain of *The Flying Dutchman*. A fearsome and ruthless captain, striking terror in the bravest of sailors, Jones became the stuff of various myths and legends of pirate lore."

[Wikipedia; Pirates, Fandom.com]