SUMMARY

The term fermentation has come to have somewhat different meanings as its underlying causes have become better understood. The derivation of the word fermentation signifies a gentle bubbling condition. The term was first applied to the production of wine more than a thousand years ago. The bubbling action was due to the conversion of sugar to carbon dioxide gas. When the reaction was defined following the studies of Gay-Lussac,fermentation came to mean the breakdown of sugar into alcohol and, carbon dioxide. Pasteur later demonstrated

the relationship of yeast to this reaction, and the word fermentation became associated with microorganisms, and still later with enzymes. The early research on fermentation dealt mostly with carbohydrates and reactions that liberated carbon dioxide. It was soon recognized, however, that microorganisms or enzymes acting on sugars didnot always evolve gas. Further, many of the microorganisms and enzymes studied also had the ability to break down non carbohydrate materials such as proteins and fats, which yielded carbon dioxide other gases, and a wide range of additional materials.