Note that there is one file for each wave. These are Igor Binary data files and store the wave data in a compact format. For the benefit of programmers, the Igor binary wave file format is documented in Igor Technical Note #003.

The "procedure" file holds the text in the experiment's built-in procedure window. In this example, the experiment has an additional procedure window called Proc0 and a notebook.

The "variables" file stores the experiment's numeric and string variables in a binary format.

The "miscellaneous" file stores pictures, page setup records, XOP settings, and other data.

The advantages of the unpacked experiment format are:

- Igor can save the experiment faster because it does not need to update files for waves, procedures or notebooks that have not changed.
- You can share files stored in one experiment with another experiment. However, sharing files can cause problems when you move an experiment to another disk. See **References to Files and Folders** on page II-24 for an explanation.

The disadvantages of the unpacked experiment format are:

- It takes more disk space, especially for experiments that have a lot of small waves.
- You need to keep the experiment file and folder together when you move the experiment to another disk.

Opening Experiments

You can open an experiment stored on disk by choosing Open Experiment from the File menu. You can first save your current experiment if it has been modified. Then Igor presents the Open File dialog.

When you select an experiment file and click the Open button, Igor loads the experiment, including all waves, variables, graphs, tables, page layouts, notebooks, procedures and other objects that constitute the experiment.

See **How Experiments Are Loaded** on page II-26 for details on how experiments are loaded.

Getting Information About the Current Experiment

You can see summary information about the current experiment by choosing File→Experiment Information. This displays the Experiment Information dialog.

The dialog shows when the current was last saved, whether it was modified since the last save, and other general information.

The dialog also shows whether the experiment uses long wave, variable, data folder, target window or symbolic path names. Experiments that use long names require Igor Pro 8.00 or later. See **Long Object Names** on page III-502 for details.

Merging Experiments

Normally Igor closes the currently opened experiment before opening a new one. But it is possible to merge the contents of an experiment file into the current experiment. This is useful, for example, if you want to create a page layout that contains graphs from two or more experiments. To do this, press Option (*Macintosh*) or Alt (*Windows*) and choose Merge Experiment from the File menu.

Note: *Merging experiments is an advanced feature that has some inherent problems and should be used judiciously*. If you are just learning to use Igor Pro, you should avoid merging experiments until you have become proficient. You may want to skim the rest of this section or skip it entirely. It assumes a high level of familiarity with Igor.

The first problem is that the merge operation creates a copy of data and other objects (e.g., graphs, procedure files, notebooks) stored in a packed experiment file. Whenever you create a copy there is a possibility