Wet Mount of Cheek Cells

Cheek cells are a type of epithelial (tissue that lines body cavities) tissue. They serve to protect the underlying tissues.

1. Place a drop of saline (0.9 % NaCl) in the center of a clean slide. Use only 1 small drop of saline.
2. Gently use the blunt end of a toothpick to rub the inside surface of your cheek. Do not stab yourself! Make sure you are rubbing inside your mouth. Do not scrape around your teeth.
3. Mix the blunt end of the toothpick into the saline. Do not worry if you don't see anything coming off of the toothpick, the cells are there.
4. Cover the wet mount with a coverslip. Remember to angle the coverslip as you drop it onto the wet mount.
5. Add a drop of methylene blue stain to the slide, adjacent to the coverslip. Apply a piece of absorbent paper to the opposite side (side away from the stain droplet) of the coverslip to draw the stain across the slide.
6. Throw away the toothpick and absorbent paper according to your instructor's directions.
7. Place the slide on the microscope stage. Use the scanning objective to find what looks like blue-stained dust. Sharpen the image using the fine adjustment knobs. Adjust the lighting of the image.
8. Center a cluster of cells (dust) in the field of view.
9. Rotate the 10X objective over the stage. Fine adjust the image.
10. Rotate the 40X objective over the stage. Fine adjust the image. Draw** (in color) at least 5 cells in your field of view in the circle below. Label at least 3 structures in your drawing.
11. Dispose of this slide as directed by your instructor.

*It is important when drawing images viewed through the microscope that you exaggerate the size of the structures. Drawing what you see exactly, the same size as you see it, is not helpful when you are trying to remember this slide in the future.

Cheek cells (400X) stained with methylene blue.