Courts Lacked Evidence; Lynch Mob Didn't Need It

NEW YORK—The New Leader, liberal white weekly, last week told the story behind Cellos Harrison's lynching in Marianna, Fla.—the story of a mob bent on punishing a suspect against whom the courts could find no evidence of guilt.

At the time of the lynching, June 15, 1943, Harrison was immune to a second indictment, having been cleared in the first by the Florida Supreme Court, which had ruled out his alleged confession of the murder of Johnnie Mayo, white filling station operator.

Sixteen months after the murder, 20-year-old Harrison was arrested with several other suspects, released and rearrested after a conference between the newly elected sheriff and a State investigator. He was convicted and sentenced to death by electrocution on June 24, 1941.

The State Supreme Court ordered a new trial because the trial court had failed to instruct the jury that Harrison's "confession," sole basis of his conviction, should be weighed with great caution.

Following a second conviction,